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TRAGEDY
OF
OROONOKO.

BY THOMAS SOUTHERN.

ADAPTED FOR THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

*As performed at the Theatres-Royal,
COVENT-GARDEN AND DRURY-LANE.*

Regulated from the Prompt Books,

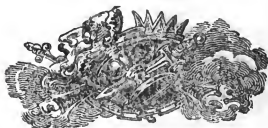
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WITH A CRITIQUE,

By R. CUMBERLAND, Esq.

The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted
in the Representation.

Cooke's Edition.



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CRITIQUE

ON

OROONOKO.

SOUTHERN's genius as a dramatic poet is to be admired in the grand, simple, and affecting delineation of a single character, but seems to have failed in the composition of a groupe. I conceive this to be the case in his tragedy of *Isabella*, and still more conspicuously observable in this of *Oroonoko*, whose auxiliary characters are thrown so entirely into the shade, that he may be almost said to engross the whole canvass to himself.

This, however, is not an objection that candid criticism would be disposed pertinaciously to insist upon, if he had not other deviations to account for, which are not to be so easily excused. Southern appears to have been misled by some of Shakspeare's eccentricities to conceive there was an excellence in the art of depicting nature in the contrarieties of great and little, elegant and vulgar: As some painters think to set off the fine person of their hero, by the introduction of a dwarf or negro in the back ground; so does he seem to study contrast in his compositions, by chequering them with a continual alternation of the deepest pathos and the meekest mummery. But even this might be endured, if this were all: we would put up with his prose for the sake of his poetry, and content ourselves with saying he had good talents with a bad taste. If in this play of *Oroonoko* he had introduced no personages more obnoxious than Peter and the Nurse, they would have been less out of place here,

with his African prince and planters in Surinam, than they are with Isabella and her associates in the drama of *The Fatal Marriage*. But when to irregularities that might be thought venial, he has added obscenities that are utterly inexcusable, it becomes painful in the extreme to review a play that, possessing so many beauties, is at the same time marked with such deformities, that no moral reader should be tempted to open it, no chaste ear be allured to listen to it. There are whole scenes, characters, and descriptions in this motley composition, which all its charms cannot atone for, and which the decent manners of the modern stage, after attempting to reform in part, has at length been obliged to expunge in whole.

But though I give the prompter credit for his cleanly book, it is not in the present instance my book. My concern lies with the dirty copy of the author's work, as he originally published it. That such women as the Widow Lackitt, Charlotte and Lucy Welldon, should be suffered to appear upon the stage, as taking interest in the fate of Oroonoko, is an unaccountable prostitution of taste and character; that we should find ourselves in the company of such fellows as Jack Stanmore and Daniel Lackitt, each of them newly risen and reeking from a sty, that only hogs should wallow in, and hog-drivers describe, insults our patience, and provokes our wonder, that an author can be at once so void of feeling, and yet so capable of exciting it; or, in other words, that an artist could bestow such workmanship upon so exquisite a gem, and inclose it in a setting which no cleanly hand can touch.

There are very striking beauties both of sentiment and of language in the part of Oroonoko. What can be finer than his retort to his betrayer?—

“ Live still in fear; it is the villain’s curse,
 “ And will avenge my chains: fear even me,
 “ Who have no power to hurt thee.”——

And again,

“ ——Let them stare on;
 “ I am unfortunate, but not asham’d
 “ Of being so. No, let the guilty blush,
 “ The white man that betray’d me.”——

There are very fine passages in the part of Isabella; but I am inclined to give the preference to this of Oroonoko: in point of construction both plays are glaringly defective, but this the most. The metrical style of Southern seems to hold a middle tone, like that of Lillo, betwixt the swelling metaphor of Shakspeare, and the smooth-flowing melodies of Rowe.

Rowe’s readers should be women, Southern’s should be men; Jonson writes to none but scholars; Shakspeare can be truly felt by none but poets.

Although this native of Angola talks a language that does not, as I conceive, exactly harmonize with the morals or manners of the country he comes from, yet we owe that indulgence to fine writing, which should induce us to let him recite every thing of that description that his poet has supplied him with; and when we find that he will not put any trust in Blandford’s friendship, after so many proofs of it, we must contrive to forget that he had ever said,

“ Men live and prosper but in mutual trust.”

In short, there are several little difficulties which we must get rid of, and some deceptions which we must encourage, by supposing that Imoinda's father, the white man, who chang'd his god for the Angola gods, and grew so great and virtuous by the transfer, gave the young prince a most excellent education, and inculcated many admirable precepts in morality and good-breeding, though he omitted to apprize him, that it would not be exactly the most elegant present he could tender to his daughter,

" — When he presented her

" With all the slaves of battle, to atone

" Her father's ghost."

This is a little inconsistency, that perhaps occurred to him, when he was lamenting to Blandford,

" — My honest wretched friends !

" Their chains are heavy."

In like manner we must allow him to forget that he would have immolated these human victims to the ghost of Imoinda's father, when he says,

" Pity's a-kin to love ; and every thought

" Of that soft kind is welcome to my soul."

In fact, he was so very fond of pity, that he had none to spare for these poor prisoners of war, but would have made a present of their blood to his wife, according to the custom of the court of Angola ; which custom the virtuous white man, who commanded his black majesty's armies, saw no occasion to change, after he had " chang'd his god ;" but, like a true convert, acquiesced very conscientiously in the practice of it. There was, however, one other circumstance appertaining to the etiquette of this court, which probably

gave him some alarm, and was so near proving fatal to his daughter, the illustrious consort of the heir apparent: I allude to a certain ceremony, which all ladies who approached the royal presence were expected to conform to, and which the prince himself explains, when he is speaking of Imoinda:

“ Her fatal beauty reach'd my father's ears;

“ He sent for her to court, where, curs'd court!

“ No woman comes but for his amorous use.”

We must not be so precise as to suppose the prince really meant to say, that Imoinda's “ beauty reached “ his father's ears;” but that the report of it was carried to him by some gentleman of the chamber, whose courtly intuition led him to conclude, that his royal master could have no possible objection to violate the chastity of his white general's fair daughter. The prince, however, informs us, that his father was rather delicate in the case of incest, though he had no scruples as to murder.

“ He poison'd her, or sent her far, far off,

“ Far from my hopes ever to see her more.

Such being the state of his father's conscience, and the custom of the court of Angola, we may rather wonder that he is so anxious to return thither.

Upon the whole, I am suspicious, that this same white man (of whom Oroonoko says, “ I was bred “ under him,” when he “ chang'd his god,” and took the gods of Angola) had been no great ornament to the religion which he gave up, nor any material reformer of that which he adopted in its stead.

I think that Oroonoko's taking part in Aboan's insurrection is hardly reconcilable to the steady character

which the poet has endowed him with, and is decidedly a breach of honour towards the humane and friendly Blandford. I must also doubt, whether it is in nature, that Imoinda, after being rescued by Blandford, should be so earnest an advocate for self-murder, only upon the apprehension of another attack from the governor; and that Oroonoko (himself a hero, nay, a host), conscious that Blandford had defended his wife, and would still defend her, should acquiesce in the proposal, and even instigate her to the deed. These considerations, I think, render the catastrophe unnecessarily precipitate, and not in nature. However, let the dramatic poet have his privileges, and strew his stage with carcasses, if such be his object: the drop of the curtain brings them all to life again.

I believe I ought to add, that there is rather too great a plenitude of general invectives against Christians. A poet so capable of saying fine things that give delight, need not fly to the resource of saying any thing that can give offence.

C.

. For the Life of Southern, author of this play, see *Isabella*.



PROLOGUE.

*AS when, in hostile times, two neighbouring states
Strive by themselves and their confederates :
The war at first is made with awkward skill,
And soldiers clumsily each other kill ;
Till time, at length, their untaught fury tames,
And into rules their heedless rage reclaims :
Then every science by degrees is made
Subservient to the man-destroying trade :
Wit, wisdom, reading, observation, art ;
A well-turn'd head to guide a generous heart.
So it may prove with our contending stages,
If you will kindly but supply their wages ;
Which you, with ease, may furnish, by retrenching
Your superfluities of wine and wenching.
Who'd grudge to spare from riot and hard drinking,
To lay it out on means to mend his thinking ?
To follow such advice you should have leisure ;
Since what refines your sense, refines your pleasure.
Women grown tame by use, each fool can get ;
But cuckolds all are made by men of wit.
To virgin favours fools have no pretence ;
For maidenheads were made for men of sense.
'Tis not enough to have a horse well bred,
To shew his mettle he must be well fed ;
Nor is it all in provender and breed,
He must be try'd, and strain'd, to mend his speed.
A favour'd poet, like a pamper'd horse,
Will strain his eye-balls out to win the course.
Do you but in your wisdom vote it fit,
To yield due succours to this war of wit,
The buskins with more grace should tread the stage
Love sigh in softer strains, heroes less rage ;
Satire shall shew a triple row of teeth,
And Comedy shall laugh your fops to death :
Wit shall refine, and Pegasus shall foam,
And soar in search of ancient Greece and Rome.
And since the nation's in the conquering fit,
As you by arms, we'll conquer France in wit.
To work were over, could our poets write
With half the spirit that our soldiers fight.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Men.

ABOAN.

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR.

OROONOKO.

BLANDFORD.

HOTMAN.

STANMORE.

J. STANMORE,

DANIEL,

Captain DRIVER.

Women.

Widow LACKITT.

CHARLOTTE WELLDON.

LUCY WELLDON.

IMÓINDA.

*Planters, Indians, Negroes, men, women, and
children.*

*Scene, SURINAM, a colony in the West Indies,
at the times of the action of this tragedy in
the possession of the English.*

ORONOKO.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter WELLDON following LUCY.

Lucy. WHAT will this come to? What can it end in? you have persuaded me to leave dear England, and dearer London, the place of the world most worthy living in, to follow you a husband-hunting into America: I thought husbands grew in these plantations.

Well. Why so they do, as thick as oranges ripening one under another. Week after week they drop into some woman's mouth: 'tis but a little patience, spreading your apron in expectation, and one of 'em will fall into your lap at last.

Luc. Ay, so you say, indeed.

Well. But you have left dear London, you say: pray what have you left in London that was very dear to you, that had not left you before?

Luc. Speak for yourself, sister.

Well. Nay, I'll keep you in countenance. The young fellows, you know, the dearest part of the town, and without whom London had been a wilderness to you and me, had forsaken us a great while.

Luc. Forsaken us? I don't know that ever they had us.

Well. Forsaken us the worst way, child; that is, did not think us worth having; they neglected us, no longer designed upon us, they were tired of us. Women in London are like the rich silks, they are out of fashion a great while before they wear out——

Luc. The devil take the fashion, I say.

Well. You may tumble them over and over at their first coming up, and never disparage their price; but they fall upon wearing, immediately, lower and lower in their value, till they come to the broker at last.

Luc. Aye, aye, aye, that's the merchant they deal with. The men would have us at their own scandalous rates; their plenty makes them wanton, and in a little time, I suppose, they won't know what they would have of the women themselves.

“ *Well.* Oh, yes, they know what they would have.
“ They would have a woman give the town a pattern
“ of her person and beauty, and not stay in it so long
“ to have the whole piece worn out. They would
“ have the good face only discovered, and not the
“ folly that commonly goes along with it. They say
“ there is a vast stock of beauty in the nation, but a
“ great part of it lies in unprofitable hands; there-
“ fore, for the good of the public, they would have a
“ draught made once a quarter, send the decaying
“ beauties for breeders into the country, to make room
“ for new faces to appear, to countenance the plea-
“ sures of the town.

“ *Luc.* 'Tis very hard, the men must be young as
“ long as they live, and poor women be thought de-
“ caying and unfit for the town at one and twenty.
“ I'm sure we were not seven years in London.

“ *Well.* Not half the time taken notice of, sister.
“ The two or three last years we could make nothing
“ of it, even in a vizard-mask; not in a vizard-mask,
“ that has cheated many a man into an old acquaint-
“ tance. Our faces began to be as familiar to the
“ men of intrigue as their duns, and as much avoided.
“ We durst not appear in public places, and were al-
“ most grudged a gallery in the churches: even there
“ they had their jests upon us, and cry'd, she's in the
“ right on't, good gentlewoman, since no man con-
“ siders her body, she does very well indeed to take
“ of her soul.

“ *Luc.* Such unmanly fellows there will always be.

“ *Well.* Then you may remember we were reduced
“ to the last necessity, the necessity of making silly
“ visits to our civil acquaintance, to bring us into
“ tolerable company. Nay, the young inns of court
“ beaus, of but one term's standing in the fashion,
“ who knew nobody, but as they were shewn them
“ by the orange woman, had nick-names for us: how
“ often they laughed out, there goes my landlady; is
“ she not come to let lodgings yet?

“ *Luc.* Young coxcombs that knew no better.

“ *Well.* And that we must have come to. For
“ your part, what trade could you set up in? You
“ would never arrive at the trust and credit of a
“ guinea-bawd; you would have too much business
“ of your own ever to mind other people’s.

“ *Luc.* That is true, indeed.

“ *Well.* Then as a certain sign that there was
“ nothing more to be hoped for, the maids of the
“ chocolate houses found us out, and laughed at us:
“ our billet-doux lay there neglected for waste-paper:
“ we were cry’d down so low, we could not pass upon
“ the city; and became so notorious in our galloping
“ way, from one end of the town to t’other, that at
“ last we could hardly compass a competent change
“ of petticoats to disguise us to the hackney coach-
“ men: and then ’twas near walking a foot indeed.

“ *Luc.* Nay, that I began to be afraid of.

“ *Well.* To prevent which, with what youth and
beauty were left, some experience, and the small re-
mainder of fifteen hundred pounds a-piece, which
amounted to bare two hundred between us both, I
persuaded you to bring your person for a venture to
the Indies. Every thing has succeeded in our voy-
age: I pass for your brother: one of the richest
planters here happening to die just as we landed, I
have claimed kindred with him; so without making
his will, he has left us the credit of his relation to
trade upon: “ we pass for his cousins, coming here
“ to Surinam chiefly upon his invitation;” we live in
reputation; have the best acquaintance in the place;
and we shall find our account in’t, I warrant you.

Luc. I must rely upon you.—

Enter Widow LACKITT.

Wid. Mr Welldon, your servant. Your servant,
Mrs. Lucy, I am an ill visitor, but ’tis not too late,
I hope, to bid you welcome to this side of the world.

[*Salutes Lucy.*]

Well. Gad so, I beg your pardon, widow, I should
have done the civilities of my house before; but, as
you say, ’tis not too late, I hope—[*Going to kiss her,*

Wid. What! you think now this was a civil way of begging a kiss; and by my troth, if it were, I see no harm in it; 'tis a pitiful favour indeed that is not worth asking for: though I have known a woman speak plainer before now, and not understood neither.

Well. Not under my roof. Have at you, widow.

Wid. Why that's well said, spoke like a younger brother, that deserves to have a widow.—[*He kisses her.*] You're a younger brother I know by your kissing.

Well. How so, pray?

Wid. Why, you kiss as if you expected to be paid for't. You have birdlime upon you lips. You stick so close, there's no getting rid of you.

Well. I am a-kin to a younger brother.

Wid. So much the better: we widows are commonly the better for younger brothers.

Luc. Better or worse, most of you. But you won't be much the better for him, I can tell you.—[*Aside.*

Well. I was a younger brother; but an uncle of my mother's has maliciously left me an estate, and, I'm afraid, spoiled my fortune.

Wid. No, no; an estate will never spoil your fortune; I have a good estate myself, thank Heaven, and a kind husband that left it behind him.

Well. Thank Heaven that took him away from it, widow, and left you behind him.

Wid. Nay, Heaven's will must be done; he's in a better place.

Well. A better place for you, no doubt on't: now you may look about you; choose for yourself, Mrs. Lackitt, that's your business; for I know you design to marry again.

Wid. Oh, dear! not I, I protest and swear; I don't design it: but I won't swear neither; one does not know what may happen to tempt one.

Well. Why a lusty young fellow may happen to tempt you.

Wid. Nay, I'll do nothing rashly: I'll resolve against nothing. The devil, they say, is very busy

upon these occasions, especially with the widows. But, if I am to be tempted, it must be with a young man, I promise you.—Mrs. Lucy, your brother is a very pleasant gentleman : I came about business to him, but he turns every thing into merriment.

Well. Business, Mrs. Lackitt? then I know, you would have me to yourself. Pray, leave us together, sister. [*Exit Lucy.*] What am I drawing upon myself here? [*Aside.*

Wid. You have taken a very pretty house here; every thing so neat about you already. I hear you are laying out for a plantation.

Well. Why, yes truly, I like the country, and would buy a plantation, if I could reasonably.

Wid. Oh, by all means reasonably.

Well. If I could have one to my mind, I would think of settling among you.

Wid. Oh, you can't do better. Indeed we can't pretend to have so good company for you, as you had in England; but we shall make very much of you. For my own part, I assure you, I shall think myself very happy to be more particularly known to you.

Well. Dear Mrs. Lackitt, you do me too much honour.

Wid. Then as to a plantation, Mr. Welldon, you know I have several to dispose of. Mr. Lackitt, I thank him, has left, though I say it, the richest widow upon the place; therefore I may afford to use you better than other people can. You shall have one upon any reasonable terms.

Well. That's a fair offer, indeed.

Wid. You shall find me as easy as any body you can have to do with, I assure you. Pray try me; I would have you try me, Mr. Welldon. Well I like that name of yours exceedingly, Mr. Welldon.

Well. My name!

Wid. Oh, exceedingly! If any thing could persuade me to alter my own name, I verily believe nothing in the world would do it so soon, as to be called Mrs. Welldon.

Well. Why, indeed Welldon doth sound something better than Lackitt.

Wid. Oh, a great deal better. Not that there is so much in the name neither. But, I don't know, there is something: I should like mightily to be called Mrs. Welldon.

Well. I'm glad you like my name.

Wid. Of all things. But then there's the misfortune, one cannot change one's name without changing one's condition.

Well. You'll hardly think it worth that, I believe.

Wid. Think it worth what, sir! Changing my condition! Indeed, sir, I think it worth every thing. But alas, Mr. Welldon! I have been a widow but six weeks; 'tis too soon to think of changing one's condition yet: indeed it is: pray don't desire it of me; not but that you may persuade me to any thing, sooner than any person in the world.—

Well. Who, I, Mrs Lackitt?

Wid. Indeed you may, Mr. Welldon, sooner than any man living. Lord, there's a great deal in saving a decency: I never minded it before; well, I am glad you spoke first, to excuse my modesty. But, what? modesty means nothing, and is the virtue of a girl, that does not know what she would be at: a widow should be wiser. Now I will own to you, (but I won't confess neither) I have had a great respect for you a great while. I beg your pardon, sir; and I must declare to you, indeed I must, if you desire to dispose of all I have in the world in an honourable way, which I don't pretend to be any way deserving your consideration, my fortune and person, if you won't understand me without telling you so, are both at your service, 'gad so! another time—

Enter STANMORE.

Stan. So, Mrs. Lackitt, your widowhood's weaning a-pace, I see which way 'tis going. Welldon, you're a happy man. The women and their favours come home to you.

Wid. A fiddle of favour, Mr Stanmore: I am a

lone woman, you know it, left in a great deal of business, and business must be followed, or lost. I have several stocks of plantations upon my hands, and other things to dispose of, which Mr. Welldon may have occasion for.

Well. We were just upon the brink of a bargain, as you came in.

Stan. Let me drive it on for you.

Well. So you must, I believe, you or somebody for me.

Stan. I'll stand by you: I understand more of this business than you can pretend to.

Well. I don't pretend to it: 'tis quite out of my way indeed.

Stan. If the widow gets you to herself, she will certainly be too hard for you: I know her of old: she has no conscience in a corner; a very Jew in a bargain; and would circumcise you to get more of you.

Well. Is this true, widow?

Wid. Speak as you find, Mr. Welldon, I have offered you very fair! think upon't, and let me hear of you; the sooner the better, Mr. Welldon. [*Exit.*]

Stan. I assure you, my friend, she'll cheat you if she can.

Well. I don't know that; but I can cheat her, if I will.

Stan. Cheat her: how?

Well. I can marry her; and then I am sure I have it in my power to cheat her.

Stan. Can you marry her?

Well. Yes, faith, so she says; her pretty person and fortune, (which, one with another, you know are not contemptible) are both at my service.

Stan. Contemptible! very considerable, egad; very desirable; why, she's worth ten thousand pounds, man; a clear estate: no charge upon't, but a boobily son: he indeed was to have half; but his father be-got him, and she breeds him up not to know or have more than she has a mind to: and she has a mind to something else it seems.

Well. There's a great deal to be made of this—

[*Musing.*

Stan. A handsome fortune may be made on't; and I advise you to't by all means.

Well. To marry her! an old wanton witch! I hate her.

Stan. No matter for that: let her go to the devil for you. She'll cheat her son of a good estate for you: that's a perquisite of a widow's portion always.

Well. I have a design, and will follow her at least, till I have a pennyworth of the plantation.

Stan. I speak as a friend, when I advise you to marry her, for 'tis directly against the interest of my own family. My cousin Jack has belaboured her a good while that way.

Well. What, honest Jack! I'll not hinder him, I'll give over the thoughts of it.

Stan. He'll make nothing on't! she does not care for him. I'm glad you have her in your power.

Well. I may be able to serve him.

Stan. Here's a ship come into the river; I was in hopes it had been from England.

Well. From England!

Stan. No. I was disappointed; I long to see this handsome cousin of yours; the picture you gave me of her has charmed me.

Well. You'll see whether it has flattered her or no, in a little time. If she be recovered of that illness that was the reason of her staying behind us, I know she will come with the first opportunity. We shall see her, or hear of her death.

Stan. We'll hope the best. The ships from England are expected every day.

Well. What ship is this?

Stan. A rover, a buccaneer, a trader in slaves; that's the commodity we deal in, you know. If you have a curiosity to see our manner of marketing, I'll wait upon you.

Well. We'll take my sister with us.— [Exit.

SCENE II.

An open Place. Enter Lieutenant-Governor and BLANDFORD.

Gov. There's no resisting your fortune, Blandford; you draw all the prizes.

Blan. I draw for our lord governor, you know, his fortune favours me.

Gov. I grudge him nothing this time; but if fortune had favoured me in the last sale, the fair slave had been mine; Clemene had been mine.

Blan. Are you still in love with her?

Gov. Every day more in love with her.

Enter Captain DRIVER, teased and pulled about by Widow LACKITT, and several Planters. Enter, at another door, WELLDON, LUCY, and STANMORE.

Wid. Here I have six slaves in my lot, and not a man among them; all women and children; what can I do with 'em, Captain: pray consider I am a woman myself, and can't get my own slaves, as some of my neighbours do.

1st. Plant. I have all men in mine: pray, Captain, let the men and women be mingled together, for procreation sake, and the good of the plantation.

2d Plant. Ay, ay, a man and a woman, Captain, for the good of the plantation.

Capt. Let them mingle together, and be damned; what care I? Would you have me a pimp for the good of the plantation.

1st. Plant. I am a constant customer, Captain.

Wid. I am always ready money to you, Captain.

1st Plant. For that matter, mistress, my money is as ready as yours.

Wid. Pray hear me, Captain.

Capt. Look you, I have done my part by you; I have brought the number of slaves I bargained for; if your lots have not pleas'd you, you must draw again among yourselves.

3d Plant. I am contented with my lot.

4th Plant. I am very well satisfied.

3d Plant. We'll have no drawing again.

Capt. Do you hear, mistress? you may hold your tongue: for my part I expect my money.

Wid. Captain, nobody questions or scruples the payment: but I won't hold my tongue; 'tis too much to pray and pay too; one may speak for one's own, I hope.

Capt. Well, what would you say.

Wid. I say no more than I can make out.

Capt. Out with it then.

Wid. I say, things have not been so fair carried as they might have been. How do I know but you have juggled together in my absence? You drew the lots before I came I am sure.

Capt. That's your own fault, mistress, you might have come sooner.

Wid. Then here's a prince, as they say, among the slaves, and you set him down to go as a common man.

Capt. Have you a mind to try what a man he is? You'll find him no more than a common man at your business.

Wid. Sir, you're a scurvy fellow to talk at this rate to me. If my husband were alive, gadsbodyskins you would not use me so.

Capt. Right, mistress, I would not use you at all.

Wid. Not use me! your betters every inch of you, I would have you to know, would be glad to use me, sirrah. Marry come up here, who are you, I trow? You begin to think yourself a captain, forsooth, because we call you so. You forget yourself as fast as you can; but I remember you; I know you for a pitiful paltry fellow as you are, an upstart to prosperity; one that is but just come acquainted with cleanliness, and that never saw five shillings of your own without deserving to be hanged for them.

Gon. She has given you a broadside, Captain; you'll stand up to her.

Capt. Hang her, "stink-pot." I'll come no nearer.

Wid. By this good light it would make a woman do

a thing she never designed; marry again, though she were sure to repent it, and be revenged of such a—

J. Stan. What's the matter, Mrs. Lackitt, can I serve you.

Wid. No, no, you can't serve me: you are for serving yourself, I'm sure. Pray go about your business, I have none for you: you know, I have told you so. Lord, how can you be so troublesome: nay so unconscionable, to think that every rich widow must throw herself away upon a young fellow that has nothing?

Stan. Jack, you are answered, I suppose.

J. Stan. I'll have another pluck at her.

Wid. Mr. Welldon, I am a little out of order; but pray bring your sister to dine with me. Gad's my life, I'm out of all patience with that pitiful fellow: my flesh rises at him; I can't stay in the place where he is—

[*Exit.*

Blan. Captain, you have used the widow very familiarly.

Capt. This is my way; I have no design, and therefore am not over civil. If she had ever a handsome daughter to wheedle her out of; or if I could make any thing of her booby son—

Well. I may improve that hint, and make something of him.

[*Aside.*

Gov. She's very rich.

Capt. I'm rich myself. She has nothing that I want: I have no leaks to stop. Old women are fortune menders. I have made a good voyage, and would reap the fruits of my labours. We plow the deep, my masters; but our harvest is on shore. I am for a young woman.

Stan. Look about, Captain; there's one ripe, and ready for the sickle.

Capt. A woman indeed! I will be acquainted with her: who is she?

Well. My sister, sir.

Capt. Would I were a-kin to her: if she were my sister, she should never go out of the family. What

say you, mistress? You expect I should marry you, I suppose.

Luc. I shan't be disappointed, if you don't.

[*Turning away,*

Well. She won't break her heart, sir.

Capt. But I mean——

[*Following her.*

Well. And I mean—[*Going between him and Lucy.*]

that you must not think of her without marrying.

Capt. I mean so too.

Well. Why then your meaning's out.

Capt. You're very short.

Well. I'll grow, and be taller for you.

Capt. I shall grow angry and swear.

Well. You'll catch no fish, then.

Capt. I don't well know whether he designs to affront me, or no.

Stan. No, no, he's a little familiar; 'tis his way.

Capt. Say you so? nay, I can be as familiar as he, if that be it. Well, sir, look upon me full. What say you? how do you like me for a brother-in-law?

Well. Why yes, faith, you'll do my business, [*Turning him about.*] if we can agree about my sister's.

Capt. I don't know whether your sister will like me, or not: I can't say much to her; but I have money enough: and if you are her brother, as you seem to be a-kin to her, I know that will recommend me to you.

Well. This is your market for slaves; my sister is a free woman, and must not be disposed of in public, You shall be welcome to my house, if you please: and, upon better acquaintance, if my sister likes you, and I like your offers——

Capt. Very well, sir, I'll come and see her.

Gov. Where are the slaves, Captain? they are long a coming.

Blan. And who is this prince that's fallen to my lot for the lord governor? Let me know something of him, that I may treat him accordingly; who is he?

Capt. He's the devil of a fellow, I can tell you? a prince every inch of him: you have paid dear enough for him for all the good he'll do you: I was forced to

clap him in irons, and did not think the ship safe neither. You are in hostility with the Indians, they say; they threaten you daily: you had best have an eye upon him.

Blan. But who is he?

Gov. And how do you know him to be a prince?

Capt. He is son and heir to the great king of Angola, a mischievous monarch in those parts, who by his good will, would never let any of his neighbours be in quiet. This son was his general, a plaguy fighting fellow. I have formerly had dealings with him for slaves which he took prisoners, and have got pretty roundly by him. But the wars being at an end, and nothing more to be got by the trade of that country, I made bold to bring the prince along with me.

Gov. How could you do that?

Blan. What, steal a prince out of his own country! impossible!

Capt. 'Twas hard indeed; but I did it. You must know this Oroonoko——

Blan. Is that his name?

Capt. Ay, Oroonoko.

Gov. Oroonoko.

Capt. Is naturally inquisitive about the men and manners of the white nations. Because I could give him some account of the other parts of the world, I grew very much into his favour; in return of so great an honour, you know, I could do no less, upon my coming away, than invite him on board me: never having been in a ship, he appointed his time, and I prepared my entertainment; he came the next evening, as private as he could, with about some twenty along with him. The punch went round; and as many of his attendants as would be dangerous, I sent dead drunk on shore; the rest we secured, and so you have the prince Oroonoko.

1st Plant. Gad-a-mercy, Captain, there you were with him, i'faith.

2nd Plant. Such men as you are fit to be employed in public affairs; the plantation will thrive by you.

3d Plant. Industry ought to be encouraged.

Capt. There's nothing done without it, boys. I have made my fortune this way.

Blan. Unheard of villainy!

Stan. Barbarous treachery!

Blan. They applaud him for't.

Gov. But, Captain, methinks you have taken a great deal of pains for this prince Oroonoko; why did you part with him at the common rate of slaves?

Capt. Why, Lieutenant-governor, I'll tell you: I did design to carry him to England, to have showed him there; but I found him troublesome upon my hands, and I'm glad I'm rid of him—Oh, Oh, hark, they come.

Black slaves, men, women, and children, pass across the stage by two and two; ABOAN, and other of OROONOKO's attendants, two and two; OROONOKO last of all in chains.

Luc. Are all these wretches slaves?

Stan. All sold, they and their posterity, all slaves.

Luc. Oh, miserable fortune!

Blan. Most of them know no better; they were born so, and only change their masters. But a prince, born only to command, betrayed and sold! my heart drops blood for him.

Capt. Now, Governor, here he comes: pray observe him.

Oro. So, sir, you have kept your word with me.

Capt. I am a better Christian, I thank you, than to keep it with a Heathen.

Oro. You are a Christian? be a Christian still.

If you have any god that teaches you
To break your word, I need not curse you more:
Let him cheat you, as you are false to me.
You faithful followers of my better fortune,
We have been fellow-soldiers in the field;

[*Embracing his friends.*
Now we are fellow-slaves. This last farewell.
Be sure of one thing that will comfort us,

Whatever world we next are thrown upon
Cannot be worse than this.

[*All slaves go off but Oroonoko.*]

Capt. You see what a bloody pagan he is, Governor; but I took care that none of his followers should be in the same lot with him, for fear they should undertake some desperate action, to the danger of the colony.

Oro. Live still in fear; it is the villain's curse,
And will revenge my chains: fear even me,
Who have no power to hurt thee. Nature abhors,
And drives thee out from the society
And commerce of mankind, for breach of faith.
Men live and prosper but in mutual trust,
A confidence of one another's truth:
That thou hast violated. I have done;
I know my fortune, and submit to it.

Gov. Sir, I am sorry for your fortune, and would help it if I could.

Blan. Take off his chains. You know your condition: but you are fallen into honourable hands; you are the lord governor's slave, who will use you nobly: in his absence it shall be my care to serve you.

[*Blandford applying to him.*]

Oro. I hear you; but I can believe no more.

Gov. Captain, I am afraid the world won't speak so honourably of this action of yours as you would have them.

Capt. I have the money; let the world speak and be damn'd. I care not.

Oro. I would forget myself. Be satisfied [*To Blan.*]
I am above the rank of common slaves,
Let that content you. The Christian there that
knows me,

For his own sake will not discover more.

Capt. I have other matters to mind. You have him, and much good may do you with your prince.

[*Exit.*]

[*The planters pulling and staring at Oroonoko.*]

Blan. What would you have there? You stare

as if you never saw a man before. Stand farther off.

[Turns them away.]

Oro. Let them stare on.

I am unfortunate, but not ashamed
Of being so. No, let the guilty blush;
The white man that betray'd me: honest black
Disdains to change its colour. I am ready.
Where must I go? Dispose me as you please.
I am not well acquainted with my fortune;
But must learn to know it better: so, I know, you say,
Degrees make all things easy.

Blan. All things shall be easy.

Oro. Tear off this pomp, and let me know myself:
The slavish habit best becomes me now.
Hard fate, and whips, and chains may overpower
The frailer flesh, and bow my body down;
But there's another, nobler part of me,
Out of your reach, which you can never tame.

Blan. You shall find nothing of this wretchedness
You apprehend. We are not monsters all.
You seem unwilling to disclose yourself:
Therefore, for fear the mentioning your name
Should give you new disquiets, I presume
To call you Cæsar.

Oro. I am myself; but call me what you please.

Stan. A very good name, Cæsar.

Gov. And very fit for his character.

Oro. Was Cæsar then a slave?

Gov. I think he was; to pirates too: he was a
great conqueror, but unfortunate in his friends——

Oro. His friends were Christians?

Blan. No.

Oro. No! that's strange.

Gov. And murder'd by them.

Oro. I would be Cæsar then. Yet I will live.

Blan. Live to be happier.

Oro. Do what you will with me.

Blan. I will wait upon you, attend, and serve you.

[Exit with Oroonoko.]

Luc. Well, if the captain had brought this prince's

country along with him, and would make me queen of it, I would not have him, after doing so base a thing.

Well. He's the man to thrive in the world, sister. He'll make you the better jointure.

Luc. Hang him, nothing can prosper with him.

Stan. Enquire into the great estates, and you'll find most of them depend upon the same title of honesty: the men who raise them first are much of the captain's principles.

Well. Ay, ay, as you say, let him be damned for the good of his family. Come, sister, we are invited to dinner.

Gov. Stanmore, you dine with me. [Exeunt

ACT II. SCENE I.

Widow LACKITT's House. Enter Widow LACKITT and WELLDON.

Welldon. THIS is so great favour, I don't know how to receive it.

Wid. Oh, dear sir! you know how to receive, and how to return a favour as well as any body, I don't doubt it: 'tis not the first you have had from our sex, I suppose.

Well. But this is so unexpected.

Wid. Lord, how can you say so, Mr. Welldon? I won't believe you. Don't I know you handsome gentlemen expect every thing a woman can do for you? And, by my troth, you're in the right on't. I think one can't do too much for a handsome gentleman; and so you shall find it.

Well. I shall never have such an offer again, that is certain. What shall I do? I am mightily divided—

[Pretending a concern.

Wid. Divided! Oh, dear! I hope not so, sir. If I marry, truly, I expect to have you to myself.

Well. There is no danger of that, Mrs. Lackitt. I am divided in my thoughts. My father, upon his death-bed, obliged me to see my sister disposed of, before I married myself. 'Tis that sticks upon me.

They say, indeed, promises are to be broken or kept : and I know 'tis a foolish thing to be tied to a promise ; but I can't help it. I don't know how to get rid of it.

Wid. Is that all?

Well. All in all to me. The commands of a dying father you know ought to be obeyed.

Wid. And so they may.

Well. Impossible, to do me any good.

Wid. They shan't be your hindrance. You would have a husband for your sister, you say : he must be very well to pass too in the world, I suppose.

Well. I would not throw her away.

Wid. Then marry her out of hand to the sea-captain you were speaking of.

Well. I was thinking of him ; but 'tis to no purpose : she hates him.

Wid. Does she hate him ? Nay, 'tis no matter ; an impudent rascal as he is ; I would not advise her to marry him.

Well. Can you think of nobody else?

Wid. Let me see.

Well. Ay, pray do ; I should be loth to part with my good fortune in you for so small a matter as a sister ; but you find how it is with me.

Wid. Well remembered, i'faith. Well, if I thought you would like of it, I have a husband for her. What do you think of my son ?

Well. You don't think of it yourself?

Wid. I protest but I do. I am in earnest, if you are. He shall marry her within this half hour, if you will give your consent to it.

Well. I give my consent ! I'll answer for my sister, she shall have him. You may be sure I shall be glad to get over the difficulty.

Wid. No more to be said then ; that difficulty is over. But I vow and swear you frightened me, Mr. Welldon. If I had not had a son now, for your sister, what must I have done, do you think ? Were you not an ill-natured thing to boggle at a promise ? I could break twenty for you.

Well. I am the more obliged to you: but this son will save all.

Wid. He's in the house. I'll go and bring him myself. [*Going.*] You would do well to break the business to your sister: she's within; I'll send her to you— [*Going again, comes back.*]

Well. Pray do.

Wid. But, do you hear? Perhaps she may stand upon her maidenly behaviour, and blush, and play the fool, and delay: but don't be answered so. What! she is not a girl at these years. Shew your authority, and tell her roundly she must be married immediately. I'll manage my son, I warrant you— [*Goes out in haste.*]

Well. The widow's in haste, I see. I thought I had laid a rub in the road, about my sister; but she had stepped over that. She is making way for herself as fast as she can; but little thinks where she is going. I could tell her she is going to play the fool; but people don't love to hear of their faults; beside, that is not my business at present.

Enter Lucy.

So, sister, I have a husband for you—

Luc. With all my heart. I don't know what confinement marriage may be to the men; but I'm sure the women have no liberty without it. I'm for any thing that will deliver me from the care of a reputation, which I begin to find impossible to preserve.

Well. I'll ease you of that care. You must be married immediately.

Luc. The sooner the better; for I am quite tired of setting up for a husband. The widow's foolish son is the man, I suppose.

Well. I considered your constitution, sister; and, finding you would have occasion for a fool, I have provided accordingly.

Luc. I don't know what occasion I may have for a fool when I am married; but I find none but fools have occasion to marry.

Well. Since he is to be a fool then, I thought it

better for you to have one of his mother's making than your own ; 'twill save you the trouble.

Luc. I thank you. You take a great deal of pains for me : but, pray, tell me, what you are doing for yourself all this while.

Well. You are never true to your own secrets ; and therefore I won't trust you with mine. Only remember this, I am your eldest sister, and consequently, laying my breeches aside, have as much occasion for a husband as you can have. I have a man in my eye, be satisfied.

Enter Widow LACKITT, with her son DANIEL.

Wid. Come, Daniel, hold up thy head, child : look like a man : you must not take it as you have done. Gad's my life ! there is nothing to be done with twirling your hat, man.

Dan. Why, mother, what's to be done then ?

Wid. Why, look me in the face, and mind what I say to you.

Dan. Marry, who's the fool then ? What shall I get by minding what you say to me ?

Wid. Mrs. Lucy, the boy is bashful ; don't discourage him. Pray, come a little forward, and let him salute you. [*Going between Lucy and Daniel.*]

Luc. A fine husband I am to have truly ! [*To Wel.*]

Wid. Come, Daniel, you must be acquainted with this gentlewoman.

Dan. Nay, I am not proud ; that is not my fault. I am presently acquainted, when I know the company ; but this gentlewoman is a stranger to me.

Wid. She is your mistress. I have spoke a good word for you. Make her a bow, and go and kiss her.

Dan. Kiss her ! have a care what you say : I warrant she scorns your words. Such fine folks are not used to be slopp'd and kiss'd. Do you think I don't know that mother ?

Wid. Try her, try her, man. [*Daniel bows, she thrusts him forward.*] Why, that's well done : go nearer her.

Dan. Is the devil in the woman ? Why, so I can

go nearer her, if you would let a body alone. [*To his mother.*] Cry your mercy, forsooth; my mother is always shaming one before company. She would have me as unmannerly as herself, and offer to kiss you. [*To Lucy.*]

Well. Why, won't you kiss her?

Dan. Why, pray, may I?

Well. Kiss her, kiss her, man.

Dan. Marry, and I will. [*Kisses her.*] Gadzooks, she kisses rarely! An' please you, mistress, and, seeing mother will have it so, I don't much care if I kiss you again, forsooth. [*Kisses her again.*]

Luc. Well, how do you like me now?

Dan. Like you! Marry, I don't know. You have bewitched me, I think. I was never so in my born days before.

Wid. You must marry this fine woman, Daniel.

Dan. Hey-day! I marry her! I was never married in all my life. What must I do with her then, mother?

Wid. You must live with her, eat and drink with her, go to bed with her, and sleep with her.

Dan. Nay, marry, if I must go to bed with her, I shall never sleep, that's certain: she'll break me of my rest, quite and clean, I can tell you beforehand. As for eating and drinking with her, why, I have a good stomach, and can play my part in any company. But how do you think I can go to bed to a woman I don't know?

Well. You shall know her better.

Dan. Say you so, sir?

Well. Kiss her again. [*Daniel kisses Lucy.*]

Dan. Nay, kissing, I find, will make us presently acquainted. We'll steal into a corner to practise a little; and then I shall be able to do any thing.

Well. The young man mends apace.

Wid. Pray don't baulk him.

Dan. Mother, mother, if you'll stay in the room by me, and promise not to leave me, I don't care, for once, if I venture to go to bed with her.

Wid. There's a good child; go in, and put on thy

best clothes. Pluck up a spirit; I'll stay in the room by thee. She won't hurt thee, I warrant thee.

Dan. Nay, as to that matter, I am not afraid of her. I'll give her as good as she brings. I have a Rowland for her Oliver, and so thou may tell her.

[*Exit.*

Wid. Mrs. Lucy, we sha'n't stay for you: you are in readiness, I suppose.

Well. She is always ready to do what I would have her, I must say that for my sister.

Wid. 'Twill be her own another day, Mr. Well-don; we'll marry them out of hand, and then——

Well. And then, Mrs. Lackitt, look to yourself.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter OROONOKO and BLANDFORD.

"*Oro.* You grant I have good reason to suspect

" All the professions you can make to me.

" *Blan.* Indeed you have.

" *Oro.* The dog that sold me did profess as much

" As you can do—But yet, I know not why—

" Whether it is because I'm fallen so low,

" And have no more to fear—That is not it:

" I am a slave no longer than I please.

" 'Tis something nobler—Being just myself,

" I am inclining to think others so:

" 'Tis that prevails upon me to believe you.

" *Blan.* You may believe me.

" *Oro.* I do believe you.

" From what I know of you, you are no fool:

" Fools only are the knaves, and live by tricks:

" Wise men may thrive without them, and be honest.

" *Blan.* They won't all take your counsel. [*Aside.*"]

Oro. "You know my story, and" you say you are
A friend to my misfortunes: that's a name
Will teach you what you owe yourself and me.

Blan. I'll study to deserve to be your friend.

When once our noble governor arrives,
With him you will not need my interest:
He is too generous not to feel your wrongs.
But be assur'd I will employ my pow'r,

And find the means to send you home again.

Oro. I thank you, sir—My honest, wretched friends!

[Sighing.]

Their chains are heavy: they have hardly found
So kind a master. May I ask you, sir,
What is become of them? Perhaps I should not.
You will forgive a stranger.

Blan. I'll enquire,
And use my best endeavours, where they are,
To have them gently us'd.

Oro. Once more I thank you.
You offer every cordial that can keep
My hopes alive, to wait a better day.
What friendly care can do, you have apply'd:
But oh! I have a grief admits no cure.

Blan. You do not know, sir——

Oro. Can you raise the dead?
Pursue and overtake the wings of time,
And bring about again the hours, the days,
The years that made me happy?

Blan. That is not to be done.

Oro. No, there is nothing to be done for me.

[Kneeling and kissing the earth.]

Thou god ador'd! thou ever glorious sun!
If she be yet on earth, send me a beam
Of thy all-seeing pow'r to light me to her;
Or, if thy sister goddess has preferr'd
Her beauty to the skies, to be a star,
Oh, tell me where she shines, that I may stand
Whole nights, and gaze upon her.

Blan. I am rude and interrupt you.

Oro. I am troublesome:

But pray, give me your pardon. My swell'n heart
Bursts out its passage, and I must complain,
(Oh, can you think of nothing dearer to me,
Dearer than liberty, my country, friends,
Much dearer than my life?) that I have lost
The tend'rest, best belov'd, and loving wife.

Blan. Alas, I pity you!

Oro. Do, pity me:

Pity's a-kin to love; and every thought
Of that soft kind is welcome to my soul.

I would be pity'd here.

Blan. I dare not ask

More than you please to tell me: but if you
Think it convenient to let me know
Your story, I dare promise you to bear
A part in your distress, if not assist you.

Oro. Thou honest hearted man! I wanted such,
Just such a friend as thou art, that would sit
Still as the night, and let me talk whole days
Of my Imoinda. Oh, I'll tell thee all
From first to last! and pray, observe me well.

Blan. I will, most heedfully.

Oro. There was a stranger in my father's court,
Valu'd and honour'd much. He was a white,
The first I ever saw of your complexion.
He chang'd his god for ours, and so grew great,
Of many virtues, and so sam'd in arms,
He still commanded all my father's wars.
I was bred under him. One fatal day,
The armies joining, he before me stepp'd,
Receiving in his breast a poison'd dart
Levell'd at me. He died within my arms.
I've tir'd you already.

Blan. Pray, go on.

Oro. He left an only daughter, whom he brought
An infant to Angola. When I came
Back to the court, a happy conqueror,
Humanity oblig'd me to condole
With this sad virgin, for a father's loss;
Lost for my safety. I presented her
With all the slaves of battle, to atone
Her father's ghost. But, when I saw her face,
And heard her speak, I offer'd up myself
To be the sacrifice. She bow'd and blush'd,
I wonder'd and ador'd. The sacred pow'r
That had subdu'd me, then inspir'd my tongue,
Inclin'd her heart, and all our talk was love.

Blan. Then you were happy.

Oro. Oh, I was too happy ;
I marry'd her : and, though my country's custom
Indulg'd the privilege of many wives,
I swore myself never to know but her.
She grew with child, and I grew happier still.
Oh, my Imoinda ! but it could not last.
Her fatal beauty reach'd my father's ears :
He sent for her to court, where, cursed court !
No woman comes but for his amorous use.
He raging to possess her, she was forc'd
To own herself my wife. The furious king
Started at incest ; but grown desperate,
Not daring to enjoy what he desir'd,
In mad revenge, (which I could never learn)
He poison'd her, or sent her far, far off,
Far from my hopes ever to see her more.

Blan. Most barbarous of fathers ! The sad tale
Has struck me dumb with wonder.

Oro. I have done.

I'll trouble you no farther. Now and then
A sigh will have its way ; that shall be all.

Enter STANMORE.

Stan. Blandford, the lieutenant-governor is gone to
your plantation. He desires you would bring the
royal slave with you. The sight of his fair mistress,
he says, is an entertainment for a prince. He would
have his opinion of her.

Oro. Is he a lover ?

Blan. So he says himself: he flatters a beautiful
slave that I have, and calls her mistress.

Oro. Must he then flatter her to call her mistress ?
I pity the proud man, who thinks himself
Above being in love. What, tho' she be a slave,
She may deserve him.

Blan. You shall judge of that when you see her, sir.

Oro. I go with you. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Plantation. Licut. Governor following IMOINDA.

Gov. I have disturb'd you. I confess my faults,
My fair Clemene ; " but begin again,

“ And I will listen to your mournful song,
 “ Sweet as the soft complaining nightingale’s;
 “ While every note calls out my trembling soul,
 “ And leaves me silent, as the midnight groves,
 “ Only to shelter you.” Sing, sing again,
 And let me wonder at the many ways
 You have to ravish me.

Imo. Oh, I can weep
 Enough for you and me, if that will please you.

Gov. You must not weep: I come to dry your
 tears,

And raise you from your sorrow. Look upon me:

“ Look with the eyes of kind indulging love,

“ That I may have full cause for what I say.”

I came to offer you your liberty,

And be myself the slave. You turn away;

[Following her.]

But every thing becomes you. I may take

This pretty hand: I know your modesty

Would draw it back; but you would take it ill

If I should let it go; I know ye would.

You shall be gently forc’d to please yourself:

That you will thank me for.

*[She struggles and gets her hand from him, then he
 offers to kiss her.]*

Nay, if you struggle with me, I must take——

Imo. You may my life, that I can part with freely.

[Exit.]

Enter BLANDFORD, STANMORE, and OROONOKO.

Blan. So, Governor, we don’t disturb you, I
 hope.

Your mistress has left you. You were making love:
 She’s thankful for the honour, I suppose.

Gov. Quite insensible to all I say and do.

When I speak to her, she sighs, or weeps;

But never answers me as I would have her.

Stan. There’s something nearer than her slavery
 that touches her.

Blan. What do her fellow-slaves say of her? Can’t
 they find the cause.

Gov. Some of them, who pretend to be wiser than the rest, and hate her, I suppose for being used better than they are, will needs have it that she is with child.

Blan. Poor wretch; if it be so I pity her. She has lost a husband, that, perhaps, was dear To her; and then you cannot blame her.

Oro. If it be so, indeed you cannot blame her.

[*Sighing.*

Gov. No, no, it is not so. If it be so, I must still love her; and, desiring still, I must enjoy her.

Blan. Try what you can do with fair means, and welcome.

Gov. I'll give you ten slaves for her.

Blan. You know she is our lord governor's; but, if I could dispose of her, I would not now, especially to you.

Gov. Why not to me?

Blan. I mean against her will. You are in love with her;

And we all know what your desires would have. Love stops at nothing but possession.

"Were she within your pow'r, you do not know

"How soon you would be tempted to forget

"The nature of the deed, and, may be, act

"A violence you after would repent."

Oro. 'Tis godlike in you to protect the weak.

Gov. Fie, fie! I would not force her. Tho' she be A slave, her mind is free, and should consent.

Oro. Such honour will engage her to consent: And then, if you're in love, she's worth the having. Shall we not see the wonder?

Gov. Have a care;

You have a heart, and she has conqu'ring eyes.

Oro. I have a heart; but if it could be false To my first vows, ever to love again, These honest hands should tear it from my breast, And throw the traitor from me. Oh, Imoinda, Living or dead, I can be only thine!

Blan. Imoinda was his wife: she's either dead,
Or, living, dead to him: forc'd from his arms
By an inhuman father. Another time
I'll tell you all. [*To the Gov. and Stan.*

Stan. Hark! the slaves have done their work;
And now begins their evening merriment.

Blan. The men are all in love with fair Clemene
As much as you are, and the women hate her,
From an instinct of natural jealousy.
They sing and dance, and try their little tricks
To entertain her, and divert her sadness.
May be she is among them. Shall we see. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

*The slaves, men, women, and children, upon the
ground; some rise and dance.*

“ A SONG, by a BOY.

“ *A lass there lives upon the green,*
“ *Could I her picture draw;*
“ *A brighter nymph was never seen,*
“ *That looks and reigns a little queen,*
“ *And keeps the swains in awe.*
“ *Her eyes are Cupid's darts and wings,*
“ *Her eyebrows are his bow:*
“ *Her silken hair the silver strings,*
“ *Which sure and swift destruction brings*
“ *To all the world below.*

“ *If Pastorella's dawning light*
“ *Can warm and wound us so,*
“ *Her noon will shine so piercing bright,*
“ *Each glancing beam will kill outright,*
“ *And every swain subdue.*

“ A SONG, by a MAN.

“ *Bright Cynthia's power, divinely great,*
“ *What heart is not obeying?*
“ *A thousand Cupids on her wait,*
“ *And in her eyes are playing.*
“ *She seems the queen of love to reign;*
“ *For she alone dispenses*

" *Such sweets as best can entertain*

" *The gust of all the senses.*

" *Her face a charming prospect brings;*

" *Her breath gives bulmy blisses;*

" *I hear an angel when she sings,*

" *And taste of heav'n in kisses.*

" *Four senses thus she feasts with joy,*

" *From nature's richest treasure:*

" *Let me the other sense employ,*

" *And I shall die with pleasure."*

[*During the entertainment, the Governor, Blandford, Stanmore, Oroonoko, enter as spectators; that ended, Captain Driver, Jack Stanmore, and several planters enter with their swords drawn. Drum beats, and a bell rings.*

Capt. Where are you, Governor? Make what haste you can

To save yourself and the whole colony.

I bid them ring the bell.

Gov. What's the matter?

J. Stan. The Indians are come down upon us: they have plundered some of the plantations already, and are marching this way as fast as they can.

Gov. What can we do against them?

Blan. We shall be able to make a stand, till more planters come in to us.

J. Stan. There are a great many more without, if you would shew yourself, and put us in order.

Gov. There's no danger of the white slaves, they'll not stir. Blandford and Stanmore, come you along with me. Some of you stay here to look after the black slaves.

[*All go out but the captain and six planters, who all at once seize Oroonoko.*

1st. Plant. Ay, ay, let us alone.

Capt. In the first place we secure you, sir,
As an enemy to government.

Oro. Are you there, sir? You are my constant friend.

1st. *Plant.* You will be able to do a great deal of mischief.

Capt. But we shall prevent you: bring the irons hither. He has the malice of a slave in him, and would be glad to be cutting his masters' throats. I know him. Chain his hands and feet, that he may not run over to 'em. If they have him, they'll carry him on their backs, that I can tell 'em.

[As they are chaining him, Blandford enters, runs to 'em.]

Blan. What are you doing there?

Capt. Securing the main chance: this is a bosom enemy.

Blan. Away, you brutes: I'll answer with my life for his behaviour; so tell the governor.

Capt. and Plant. Well, sir, so we will.

[Exeunt Captain and Planters.]

Oro. Give me a sword, and I'll deserve your trust.

[A party of Indians enter, hurrying Imoinda among the slaves; another party of Indians sustains 'em retreating, followed at a distance by the Governor with the planters: Blandford, Oroonoko, join 'em.]

Blan. Hell and the devil! they drive away our slaves before our faces. Governor, can you stand tamely by, and suffer this? Clemene, sir, your mistress, is among 'em.

Gov. We throw ourselves away, in the attempt to rescue 'em.

Oro. A lover cannot fall more glorious,
Than in the cause of love. He, that deserves
His mistress' favour, wo' not stay behind:
I'll lead you on, be bold, and follow me.

[Oroonoko, at the head of the planters, falls upon the Indians with a great shout, and beats them off.]

Enter IMOINDA.

Imo. I'm tost about by my tempestuous fate,
And no where must have rest: Indians, or English!
Whoever has me, I am still a slave.
No matter whose I am, since I'm no more
My royal master's; since I'm his no more.

Oh, I was happy! nay, I will be happy,
In the dear thought that I am still his wife,
Though far divided from him.

[Draws off to a corner of the stage.]

*Enter the Governor with OROONOKO, BLANDFORD,
STANMORE, and the planters.*

Gov. Thou glorious man! thou something greater
sure

Than Cæsar ever was! that single arm
Has sav'd us all: accept our general thanks.

[All bow to Oroonoko.]

And what can we do more to recompense
Such noble services, you shall command.
Clemene too shall thank you—she is safe—
Look up and bless your brave deliverer.

*[Brings Clemene forward, looking down on the
ground.]*

Oro. Bless me indeed!

Blan. You start!

Oro. Oh, all you gods,
Who govern this great world, and bring about
Things strange and unexpected! can it be?

Gov. What is't you stare at so?

Oro. Answer me, some of you; you who have
pow'r,
And have your senses free: or are you all
Struck through with wonder too?

[Looking still fixed on her.]

Blan. What would you know?

Oro. My soul steals from my body through my
eyes;

All that is left of life I'll gaze away,
And die upon the pleasure.

Gov. This is strange!

Oro. If you but mock me with her image here:
If she be not Imoinda—

*[She looks upon him, and falls into a swoon; he
runs to her.]*

Ha! she faints!

Nay, then it must be she: it is Imoinda:

My heart confesses her, and leaps for joy,
To welcome her to her own empire here.

" I feel her all, in every part of me.

" Oh, let me press her in my eager arms,

" Wake her to life, and with this kindling kiss

" Give back that soul she only lent me. [*Kisses her.*

" *Gov.* I am amaz'd!

" *Blan.* I am as much as you.

" *Oro.*" Imoinda! Oh, thy Oroonoko calls.

[*Imoinda coming to life.*

Imo. My Oroonoko! Oh, I can't believe

What any man can say. But, if I am

To be deceiv'd, there's something in that name,

That voice, that face—— [*Staring at him.*

Oh, if I know myself, I cannot be mistaken:

[*Runs and embraces Oroonoko.*

Oro. Never here:

You cannot be mistaken: I am yours,

Your Oroonoko, all that you would have,

Your tender loving husband.

Imo. All indeed

That I would have; my husband! then I am

Alive, and waking to the joys I feel:

Thev were so great, I could not think 'em true:

But I believe all that you say to me:

For truth itself and everlasting love

Grows in this breast, and pleasure in these arms.

Oro. Take, take me all; enquire into my heart,

(You know the way to every secret there)

My heart the sacred treasury of love:

And if, in absence, I have misemploy'd

A mite from the rich store; if I have spent

A wish, a sigh, but what I sent to you;

May I be curs'd to wish and sigh in vain,

And you not pity me.

Imo. Oh, I believe,

And know you by myself. If these sad eyes,

Since last we parted, have beheld the face

Of any comfort, or once wish'd to see

The light of any other heav'n but you,

May I be struck this moment blind, and lose
Your blessed sight, never to find you more.

Oro. Imoinda! Oh, this separation
Has made you dearer, if it can be so,
Than you were ever to me. You appear
Like a kind star to my benighted steps,
To guide me on my way to happiness:
I cannot miss it now. Governor, friend,
You think me mad: but let me bless you all,
Who, any ways, have been the instruments
Of finding her again. Imoinda's found!
And ev'ry thing that I would have in her.

[*Embracing her with the most passionate fondness.*

Stan. Where's your mistress now, governor?

Gov. Why, where most men's mistresses are
forced to be sometimes, with her husband it seems:
but I won't lose her so. [Aside.

Stan. He has fought lustily for her, and deserves
her, I'll say that for him.

Blan. Sir, we congratulate your happiness: I do
most heartily.

Gov. And all of us; but how it comes to pass——

"Oro. That will require

"More precious time than I can spare you now.

"I have a thousand things to ask her,

"And she has many more to know of me.

"But you have made me happier, I confess,

"Acknowledge it, much happier, than I

"Have words or pow'r to tell you. Captain, you,

"Ev'n you, who most have wrong'd me, I forgive.

"I wo'not say you have betray'd me now:

"I'll think you but the minister of Fate,

"To bring me to my lov'd Imoinda here."

Imo. How, how, shall I receive you? how be
Of such endearments, all this tenderness? [worthy

'These are the transports of prosperity,
When fortune smiles upon us.

Oro. Let the fools

Who follow fortune, live upon her smiles;
All our prosperity is plac'd in love,

We have enough of that to make us happy.
'This little spot of earth, you stand upon,
Is more to me than the extended plains
Of my great father's kingdom. Here I reign
In full delights, in joys to pow'r unknown;
Your love my empire, and your heart my throne.
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III. SCENE 1.

Enter ABOAN, with several Slaves, and HOTMAN.

Hotman. WHAT! to be slaves to cowards! Slaves
to rogues who can't defend themselves!

Abo. Who is this fellow? he talks as if he were
acquainted with our design: is he one of us?

[*Aside to his own gang.*]

Slave. Not yet: but he will be glad to make one,
I believe.

Abo. He makes a mighty noise.

Hot. Go, sneak in corners; whisper out your
griefs,

For fear your masters hear you: cringe and crouch
Under the bloody whip, like beaten curs,
That lick their wounds, and know no other cure.
All, wretches all! you feel their cruelty,
As much as I can feel, but dare not groan.
For my part, while I have a life and tongue,
I'll curse the authors of my slavery.

Abo. Have you been long a slave?

Hot. Yes, many years.

Abo. And do you only curse?

Hot. Curse! only curse! I cannot conjure
To raise the spirits up of other men:
I am but one. Oh, for a soul of fire,
To warm and animate our common cause,
And make a body of us, then I would
Do something more than curse.

Abo. That body set on foot, you would be one,
A limb, to lend it motion.

Hot. I would be

The heart of it; the head, the hand, and heart :
Would I could see the day!

Abo. You will do all yourself.

Hot. I would do more

Than I shall speak, but I may find a time——

Abo. The time may come to you ; be ready for't.
Methinks he talks too much; I'll know him more,
Before I trust him farther. [*Aside.*

Slave. If he dares

Half what he says, he'll be of use to us.

Enter BLANDFORD.

Blan. If there be any one among you here
That did belong to Oroonoko, speak,
I come to him.

Abo. I did belong to him ; Aboan my name.

Blan. You are the man I want : pray come with
me. [*Exeunt.*

Enter OROONOKO and IMOINDA.

Oro. I do not blame my father for his love :
(Though that had been enough to ruin me)

“ 'Twas nature's fault that made you, like the sun,

“ The reasonable worship of mankind :

“ He could not help his adoration.

“ Age had not lock'd his senses up so close,

“ But he had eyes that open'd to his soul,

“ And took your beauties in, he felt your pow'r,

“ And therefore I forgive his loving you.”

But, when I think on his barbarity,
That could expose you to so many wrongs ;

Driving you out to wretched slavery,

Only for being mine ; then I confess

I wish I could forget the name of son,

That I might curse the tyrant.

Imo. I will bless him,

For I have found you here : Heav'n only knows

What is reserv'd for us : but, if we guess

The future by the past, our fortune must

Be wonderful, above the common size

Of good or ill ; it must be in extremes :

Extremely happy, or extremely wretched.

Oro. 'Tis in our power to make it happy now.

Imo. But not to keep it so.

Enter BLANDFORD and ABOAN.

Blan. My royal lord!

I have a present for you.

Oro. Aboan!

Abo. Your lowest slave.

Oro. My try'd and valu'd friend!

This worthy man always prevents my wants:

I only wish'd, and he has brought thee to me.

Thou art surpriz'd! Carry thy duty there;

[Aboan goes to Imoinda, and falls at her feet.]

While I acknowledge mine. How shall I thank you?

Blan. Believe me honest to your interest,
And I am more than paid. I have secur'd
That all your followers shall be gently us'd,
Shall wait upon your person, while you stay
Among us.

Oro. I owe every thing to you.

Blan. You must not think you are in slavery.

Oro. I do not find I am.

Blan. Kind Heav'n has miraculously sent
Those comforts that may teach you to expect
Its farther care, in your deliverance.

Oro. I sometimes think myself, Heav'n is concern'd
For my deliverance.

Blan. It will be soon;

You may expect it. Pray, in the mean time,

Appear as cheerful as you can among us.

You have some enemies, that represent

You dangerous, and would be glad to find

A reason, in your discontent, to fear:

They watch your looks. But there are honest men,
Who are your friends: you are secur'd in them.

Oro. I thank you for your caution.

Blan. I will leave you:

And be assur'd, I wish your liberty.

[Exit.]

Abo. He speaks you very fair.

Oro. He means me fair.

Abo. If he should not, my lord?

Oro. If he should not!

I'll not suspect his truth : but, if I did,
What shall I get by doubting?

Abo. You secure

Not to be disappointed : but, besides,
There's this advantage in suspecting him :
When you put off the hopes of other men,
You will rely upon your godlike self ;
And then you may be sure of liberty.

Oro. Be sure of liberty! what dost thou mean ;
Advising to rely upon myself?

I think I may be sure on't: we must wait :

'Tis worth a little patience. [Turning to Imoinda.

Abo. Oh, my lord!

Oro. What dost thou drive at?

Abo. Sir, another time

You would have found it sooner : but I see
Love has your heart, and takes up all your thoughts.

Oro. And canst thou blame me?

Abo. Sir, I must not blame you.

But, as our fortune stands, there is a passion
(Your pardon, royal mistress, I must speak)
That would become you better than your love :
A brave resentment ; which, inspir'd by you,
Might kindle and diffuse a generous rage
Among the slaves, to rouse and shake our chains,
And struggle to be free.

Oro. How can we help ourselves?

Abo. I knew you when you would have found a way.
How help ourselves! the very Indians teach us ;
We need but to attempt our liberty,
And we carry it. We have hands sufficient,
Double the number of our masters' force,
Ready to be employ'd. " What hinders us
" To set 'em at work?" We want but you
To head our enterprize, and bid us strike.

Oro. What would you do?

Abo. Cut our oppressors' throats.

Oro. And you would have me join in your design
Of murder?

Abo. It deserves a better name:
But, be it what it will, 'tis justified
By self-defence, and natural liberty.

Oro. I'll hear no more on't.

Abo. I am sorry for't.

Oro. Nor shall you think of it.

Abo. Not think of it!

Oro. No, I command you not.

Abo. Remember, sir,
You are a slave yourself, and to command
Is now another's right. Not think of it!
Since the first moment they put on my chains,
I've thought on nothing but the weight of 'em,
And how to throw 'em off. Can yours sit easy?

Oro. I have a sense of my condition,
As painful, and as quick, as yours can be.
I feel for my Imoinda and myself;
Imoinda, much the tenderest part of me.
But though I languish for my liberty,
I would not buy it at the Christian price
Of black ingratitude: they sha'not say,
That we deserv'd our fortune by our crimes.
Murder the innocent!

Abo. The innocent!

Oro. These men are so, whom you would rise
against:

If we are slaves, they did not make us slaves;
But bought us in an honest way of trade,
As we have done before 'em, bought and sold
Many a wretch, and never thought it wrong.
" They paid our price for us, and we are now
" Their property, a part of their estate,
" To manage as they please. Mistake me not."
I do not tamely say, that we should bear
All they could lay upon us: but we find
The load so light, so little to be felt,
(Considering they have us in their pow'r,
And may inflict what grievances they please)
We ought not to complain.

Abo. My royal lord!

You do not know the heavy grievances,
The toils, the labours, weary drudgeries,
Which they impose ; burdens more fit for beasts,
For senseless beasts to bear, than thinking men.
Then if you saw the bloody cruelties
They execute on every slight offence ;
Nay, sometimes, in their proud, insulting sport,
How worse than dogs they lash their fellow-creatures,
Your heart would bleed for 'em. Oh, could you know
How many wretches lift their hands and eyes
To you for their relief !

Oro. I pity 'em,
And wish I could with honesty do more.

Abo. You must do more, and may, with honesty.
Oh, royal sir, remember who you are :
A prince, born for the good of other men ;
Whose godlike office is to draw the sword
Against oppression, and set free mankind :
And this I'm sure you think oppression now.
What though you have not felt these miseries,
Never believe you are oblig'd to them :
They have their selfish reasons, may be, now,
For using of you well : but there will come
A time, when you must have your share of 'em.

Oro. You see how little cause I have to think so :
Favour'd in my own person, in my friends ;
Indulg'd in all that can concern my care,
In my Imoinda's soft society. [*Embracing her.*

Abo. And therefore would you lie contented down
In the forgetfulness and arms of love,
To get young princes for 'em ?

Oro. Say'st thou ! ha !

Abo. Princes, the heirs of empire, and the last
Of your illustrious lineage, to be born
To pamper up their pride, and be their slaves ?

Oro. Imoinda ! save me, save me from that thought.

Imo. There is no safety from it : I have long
Suffer'd it with a mother's labouring pains ;
And can no longer. Kill me, kill me now,
While I am bless'd, and happy in your love ;

" Rather than let me live to see you hate me :

" As you must hate me ; me, the only cause,

" The fountain of these flowing miseries :

" Dry up the spring of life, this pois'nous spring,

" That swells so fast, to overwhelm us all.

" *Oro.* Shall the dear babe, the eldest of my hopes,
Whom I begot a prince, be born a slave?

'The treasure of this temple was design'd

'To enrich a kingdom's fortune : shall it here

Be seiz'd upon by vile unhallow'd hands,

To be employ'd in uses most profane?

Abo. In most unworthy uses ; think of that ;

And while you may, prevent it. " Oh, my lord,

" Rely on nothing that they say to you.

" They speak you fair, I know, and bid you wait :

" But think what 'tis to wait on promises,

" And promises of men who know no tie

" Upon their words, against their interest :

" And where's their interest in freeing you?

" *Imo.* Oh, where indeed, to lose so many slaves !

" *Abo.* Nay, grant this man, you think so much

" your friend,

" Be honest, and intends all that he says ;

" He is but one ; and in a government,

" Where, he confesses, you have enemies,

" That watch your looks ; what looks can you put on,

" To please these men, who are before resolv'd

" To read 'em their own way ? Alas, my lord !

" If they incline to think you dangerous,

" They have their knavish arts to make you so :

" And then who knows how far their cruelty

" May carry their revenge ?

" *Imo.* To every thing

" That does belong to you, your friends and me :

" I shall be torn from you, forced away,

" Helpless and miserable : shall I live

" To see that day again ?

" *Oro.* That day shall never come."

Abo. I know you are persuaded to believe
The governor's arrival will prevent

These mischiefs, and bestow your liberty:
But who is sure of that? I rather fear
More mischiefs from his coming. He is young,
Luxurious, passionate, and amorous:
Such a complexion, and made bold by pow'r,
To countenance all he is prone to do,
Will know no bounds, no law against his lusts.
If in a fit of his intemperance,
With a strong hand he shall resolve to seize,
And force my royal mistress from your arms,
How can you help yourself?

Oro. Ha! thou hast rous'd
The lion in his den; he stalks abroad,
And the wide forest trembles at his roar.
I find the danger now. My spirits start
At the alarm, and from all quarters come
To man my heart, the citadel of love.
Is there a pow'r on earth to force you from me,
And shall I not resist it? "not strike first
"To keep, to save you? to prevent that curse?
"This is your cause, and shall it not prevail?"
Oh, you were born always to conquer me.
Now I am fashioned to thy purpose, speak,
What combination, what conspiracy,
Would'st thou engage me in? I'll undertake
All thou would'st have me now for liberty,
For the great cause of love and liberty.

Alto. Now, my great master, you appear yourself.
And, since we have you join'd in our design,
It cannot fail us. I have muster'd up
The choicest slaves, men who are sensible
Of their condition, and seem most resolv'd:
They have their several parties.

Oro. Summon 'em,
Assemble 'em: I will come forth and shew
Myself among 'em: if they are resolv'd,
I'll lead their foremost resolutions.

Alto. I have provided those will follow you.

Oro. With this reserve in our proceedings still,
The means that lead us to our liberty

Must not be bloody.

"*Abo.* You command in all.

" We shall expect you, Sir.

" "*Oro.* You sha'not long."

[*Exeunt Oro. and Imo. at one door, Aboan at another.*

WELLDON coming in before Mrs. LACKITT.

Wid. These unmannerly Indians were something unreasonable to disturb us just in the nick, Mr. Well-don; but I have the parson within call still, to do us the good turn.

Well. We had best stay a little, I think, to see things settled again, had not we? Marriage is a serious thing, you know.

Wid. What do you talk of a serious thing, Mr. Well-don? I think you have found me sufficiently serious: I have married my son to your sister, to pleasure you; and now I come to claim your promise to me, you tell me marriage is a serious thing.

Well. Why is it not?

Wid. Fiddle, faddle, I know what it is: 'tis not the first time I have been married, I hope: but I shall begin to think you don't design to do fairly by me, so I shall.

Well. Why indeed, Mrs. Lackitt, I'm afraid I can't do so fairly as I would by you. 'Tis what you must know first or last; and I should be the worst man in the world to conceal it any longer; therefore I must own to you that I am married already.

Wid. Married! you don't say so, I hope! how have you the conscience to tell me such a thing to my face. Have you abused me then, fool'd and cheated me? What do you take me for, Mr. Well-don? Do you think I am to be served at this rate? But you shan't find me the silly creature you think me: I would have you to know, I understand better things, than to ruin my son, without a valuable consideration. If I can't have you, I can keep my money. Your sister sha'nt have the catch of him she expected: I won't part with a shilling to 'em.

Well. You made the match yourself, you know: you can't blame me.

Wid. Yes, yes, I can, and do blame you: you might have told me before you were married.

Well. I would not have told you now: but you followed me so close, I was forced to it: indeed I am married in England; but 'tis as if I were not; for I have been parted from my wife a great while, and, to do reason on both sides, we hate one another heartily. Now I did design, and will marry you still, if you'll have a little patience.

Wid. A likely business, truly.

Well. I have a friend in England that I will write to, to poison my wife, and then I can marry you with a good conscience; if you love me, as you say you do, you'll consent to that, I'm sure.

Wid. And will he do it, do you think?

Well. At the first word, or he is not the man I take him to be.

Wid. Well, you are a dear devil, Mr. Welldon; and would you poison your wife for me?

Well. I would do any thing for you.

Wid. Well, I am mightily obliged to you. But 'twill be a great while before you can have an answer of your letter.

Well. 'Twill be a great while indeed.

Wid. In the mean time, Mr. Welldon——

Well. Why in the mean time—Here's company: we'll settle that within; I'll follow you. [*Exit Wid.*]

Enter STANMORE.

Stan. So, sir, you carry on your business swimmingly: you have stolen a wedding, I hear.

Well. Ay, my sister is married: and I am very near being run away with myself.

Stan. The widow will have you then?

Well. You come very seasonably to my rescue. Jack Stanmore is to be had, I hope.

Stan. At half an hour's warning.

Well. I must advise with you. [*Exeunt.*]

" *The Country.* Enter OROONOKO with ABOAN,

" HOTMAN, and Slaves.

" Oro. Impossible! nothing's impossible :

" We know our strength only by being try'd,

" If you object the mountains, rivers, woods

" Unpassable, that lie before our march :

" Woods we can set on fire, we swim by nature :

" What can oppose us then but we may tame?

" All things submit to virtuous industry :

" That we carry with us, that is ours.

" Slav. Great sir, we have attended all you said,

" With silent joy and admiration :

" And, were we only men, would follow such,

" So great a leader, through the untry'd world.

" But, oh, consider we have other names,

" Husbands and fathers, and have things more dear

" To us than life, our children and our wives,

" Unfit for such an expedition :

" What must become of them?

" Oro. We wo'not wrong

" The virtue of our women to believe

" There is a wife among them would refuse

" To share her husband's fortune. What is hard,

" We must make easy to them in our love: while we
" live,

" And have our limbs, we can take care of them ;

" Therefore I still propose to lead our march

" Down to the sea, and plant a colony ;

" Where, in our native innocence, we shall live

" Free, and be able to defend ourselves,

" Till stress of weather, or some accident,

" Provide a ship for us.

" Abo. An accident !

" The luckiest accident presents itself :

" The very ship that brought and made us slaves

" Swims in the river still ; I see no cause

" But we may seize on that.

" Oro. It shall be so :

" There is a justice in it pleases me.

" Do you agree to it? [To the Slaves.

" *Omnès.* We follow you.

" *Oro.* You do not relish it. [To Hotman.

" *Hot.* I'm afraid

" You'll find it difficult and dangerous.

" *Abo.* Are you the man to find the dangers first?

" You should have giv'n example. Dangerous!

" I thought you had not understood the word;

" You, who would be the head, the hand and heart:

" Sir, I remember you; you can talk well;

" I wo't doubt but you'll maintain your word.

" *Oro.* This fellow is not right, I'll try him further.
[To Aboan.

" The danger will be certain to us all,

" And death most certain in miscarrying.

" We must expect no mercy if we fail:

" Therefore our way must be not to expect:

" We'll put it out of expectation,

" By death upon the place, or liberty.

" There is no mean, but death, or liberty.

" There's no man here, I hope, but comes prepar'd

" For all that can befall him.

" *Abo.* Death is all:

" In most conditions of humanity

" To be desir'd, but to be shunn'd by none:

" The remedy of many, wish of some,

" And certain end of all.

" If there be one among us, who can fear

" The face of death, appearing like a friend,

" (As, in this cause of honour, death must be)

" How will he tremble when he sees him dress'd

" In the wild fury of our enemies,

" In all the terrors of their cruelty?

" For now, if we should fall into their hands,

" Could they invent a thousand murder'g ways,

" By racking torments, we should feel them all.

" *Hot.* What will become of us?

" *Oro.* Observe him now. [To Abo. concerning Hot.

" I could die altogether like a man,

" As you, and you, and all of us must do;

- “ But who can answer for his bravery
“ Upon the rack, where fainting, weary life,
“ Hunted thro’ every limb, is forc’d to feel.
“ An agonizing death of all its parts?
“ Who can bear this? Resolv’d to be impal’d,
“ His skin flea’d off, and roasted yet alive;
“ The quiv’ring flesh torn from his broken bones
“ By burning pincers? Who can bear these pains?
“ *Hot.* They are not to be borne.
“ [*Discovering all the confusion of fear.*
“ *Oro.* You see him now, this man of mighty
“ *Abo.* How his eyes roll! [words!
“ *Oro.* He cannot hide his fear.
“ I try’d him this way, and have found him out.
“ *Abo.* I could not have believ’d it. Such a blaze,
“ And not a spark of fire!
“ *Oro.* His violence
“ Made me suspect; now I’m convinc’d.
“ *Abo.* What shall we do with him?
“ *Oro.* He is not fit—
“ *Abo.* Fit! hang him, he is only fit to be
“ Just what he is; to live and die a slave,
“ The base companion of his servile fears.
“ *Oro.* We are not safe with him.
“ *Abo.* Do you think so?
“ *Oro.* He’ll certainly betray us.
“ *Abo.* That he shan’t:
“ I can take care of that: I have a way
“ To take him off his evidence.
“ *Oro.* What way? [here.
“ *Abo.* I’ll stop his mouth before you; stab him
“ And then let him inform.
“ [*Going to stab Hotman, Oroonoko holds him.*
“ *Oro.* Thou art not mad?
“ *Abo.* I would secure ourselves.
“ *Oro.* It sha’not be this way; nay, cannot be:
“ His murder will alarm all the rest,
“ Make them suspect us of barbarity;
“ And, may be, fall away from our design
“ We’ll not set out in blood. We have, my friends,

- " This night to furnish what we can provide
" For our security and just defence.
" If there be one amongst us, we suspect
" Of baseness or vile fear, it will become
" Our common care to have an eye on him.
" I wo't not name the man.
" *Abo.* You guess at him. [To Hotman.
" *Oro.* To-morrow, early as the breaking day,
" We rendezvous behind the citron grove.
" That ship secur'd, we may transport ourselves
" To our respective homes. My father's kingdom
" Shall open her wide arms to take you in,
" And nurse you for her own, adopt you all,
" All who will follow me.
" *Omnes.* All, all follow you.
" *Oro.* There I can give you all your liberty,
" Bestow its blessings, and secure them yours.
" There you shall live with honour, as becomes
" My fellow-sufferers and worthy friends.
" Thus, if we do succeed: but if we fall
" In our attempt, 'tis nobler still to die,
" Than drag the galling yoke of slavery. [*Exeunt.*"]
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ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter WELLDON " and JACK STANMORE.

- " *Welldon.* You see, honest Jack, I have been in-
" dustrious for you: you must take some pains now
" to serve yourself.
" *J. Stan.* Gad, Mr. Welldon, I have taken a
" great deal of pains; and, if the widow speak ho-
" nestly, faith and troth, she'll tell you what a pains-
" taker I am.
" *Well.* Fie, fie! not me. I am her husband, you
" know. She won't tell me what pains you have
" taken with her: besides, she takes you for me.
" *J. Stan.* That's true; I forgot you had married
" her. But if you knew all—
" *Well.* 'Tis no matter for my knowing all, if she
" does.

" *J. Stan.* Ay, ay, she does know, and more than
" ever she knew since she was a woman, for the
" time, I will be bold to say; for I have done——

" *Well.* The devil take you; for you'll never have
" done.

" *J. Stan.* As old as she is, she has a wrinkle be-
" hind more than she had, I believe; for I have
" taught her what she never knew in her life before.

" *Well.* What care I what wrinkles she has, or
" what you have taught her; if you'll let me advise
" you, you may; if not, you may prate on, and ruin
" the whole design.

" *J. Stan.* Well; well, I have done.

" *Well.* Nobody but your cousin, and you, and I,
" know any thing of this matter. I have married
" Mrs. Lackit, and put you to bed to her, which
" she knows nothing of, to serve you. In two or
" three days I'll bring it about so, to resign up my
" claim, and with her consent, quietly to you.

" *J. Stan.* But how will you do it?

" *Well.* That must be my business. In the mean
" time if you should make any noise, 'twill come to
" her ears, and be impossible to reconcile her.

" *J. Stan.* Nay, as for that, I know the way to
" reconcile her, I warrant you.

" *Well.* But how will you get her money? I am
" married to her.

" *J. Stan.* That I don't know, indeed.

" *Well.* You must leave it to me, you find. All
" the pains I shall put you to, will be to be si-
" lent. You can hold your tongue for two or three
" days.

" *J. Stan.* Truly, not well in a matter of this
" nature. I should be very unwilling to lose the
" reputation of this night's work, and the pleasure
" of telling it.

" *Well.* You must mortify that vanity a little.
" You will have time enough to brag and lie of your
" manhood, when you have her in a bare-fac'd con-
" dition to disprove you.

" *J. Stan.* Well, I'll try what I can do ; the hopes
" of her money must do it.

" *Well.* You'll come at night again? 'Tis your
" own business.

" *J. Stan.* But you have the credit on't.

" *Well.* 'Twill be your own another day, as the
" widow says. Send your cousin to me : I want his
" advice.

" *J. Stan.* I want to be recruited, I am sure. A
" good breakfast, and to bed. She has rock'd my
" cradle sufficiently. [Exit.

" *Well.* She would have a husband ; and if all be
" as he says, she has no reason to complain : but
" there is no relying on what men say upon these
" occasions : they have the benefit of their bragging,
" by recommending their abilities to other women :
" theirs is a trading estate, that lives upon credit,
" and increases by removing it out of one bank into
" another. Now poor women have not these oppor-
" tunities : we must keep our stocks dead by us, at
" home, to be ready for a purchase, when it comes,
" a husband, let him be never so dear, and be glad
" of him : or venture our fortunes abroad on such
" rotten security, that the principal and interest,
" nay, very often, our persons are in danger. If
" the women would agree (which they never will) to
" call home their effects, how many proper gentle-
" tlemen would sneak into another way of living, for
" want of being responsible in this? Then husbands
" would be cheaper. Here comes the widow ; she'll
" tell the truth, she'll not bear false witness against
" her own interest, I know."

Enter Widow LACKITT.

Well. Now, Mrs. Lackitt.

Wid. Well, well, Lackitt, or what you will now,
now I am married to you. I am very well pleased
with what I have done, I assure you.

Well. And with what I have done too, I hope.

Wid. Ah, Mr. Welldon ! I say nothing ; but you're
a dear man, and I did not think it had been in you.

Well. I have more in me than you imagine.

Wid. No, no, you can't have more than I imagine. 'Tis impossible to have more. You have enough for any woman, in an honest way, that I will say for you.

Well. Then I find you are satisfied.

Wid. Satisfied! no, indeed, I'm not to be satisfied with you or without you. To be satisfied is to have enough of you: now 'tis a folly to lie; I shall never think I can have enough of you. I shall be very fond of you. Would you have me fond of you? What do you do to me, to make me love you so well?

Well. Can't you tell what?

Wid. Go, there's no speaking to you. You bring all the blood of one's body into one's face, so you do. Why do you talk so?

Well. Why, how do I talk?

Wid. You know how: but a little colour becomes me, I believe. How do I look to-day?

Well. Oh, most lovingly, most amiably!

Wid. Nay, this can't be long a secret, I find I shall discover it by my countenance.

Well. The women will find you out, you look so cheerfully.

Wid. But do I, do I really look so cheerfully, so amiably? There is no such paint in the world as the natural glowing of complexion. Let them find me out if they please; poor creatures! I pity them. They envy me, I'm sure, and would be glad to mend their looks upon the same occasion. The young jilt-flirting girls, forsooth, believe nobody must have a husband but themselves: but I would have them to know there are other things to be taken care of, besides their green-sickness.

Well. Ay, sure, or the physicians would have but little practice."

Wid. Mr. Welldon, what must I call you? I must have some pretty fond name or other for you. What shall I call you?

Well. I thought you liked my own name.

Wid. Yes, yes, I like it; but I must have a nickname for you. Most women have nick-names for their husbands.

Well. Cuckold?

Wid. No, no; but 'tis very pretty before company; it looks negligent, and is the fashion, you know.

Well. To be negligent of their husbands, it is, indeed.

Wid. Nay, then, I won't be in the fashion; for I can never be negligent of dear Mr. Welldon; and, to convince you, here's something to encourage you not to be negligent of me.

[*Gives him a purse and a little casket.*

Five hundred pounds in gold in this, and jewels to the value of five hundred pounds more in this.

[*Welldon opens the casket.*

Well. Ay, marry, this will encourage me indeed.

Wid. There are comforts in marrying an elderly woman, Mr. Welldon. Now a young woman would have fancied she had paid you with her person, or had done you the favour.

Well. What do you talk of young women? You are as young as any of them, in every thing but their folly and ignorance.

Wid. And do you think me so? But I have no reason to suspect you. Was I not seen at your house this morning, do you think?

Well. You'll venture again; you'll come at night, I suppose?

Wid. Oh dear, at night! so soon?

Well. Nay, if you think it so soon.

Wid. Oh, no! 'tis not for that, Mr. Welldon; but—

Well. You won't come then?

Wid. Won't! I don't say I won't: that is not a word for a wife. If you command me—

Well. To please yourself.

Wid. I will come to please you.

Well. To please yourself; own it.

Wid. Well, well, to please myself, then. You are the strangest man in the world; nothing can 'scape you; you'll to the bottom of every thing.

Enter DANIEL, LUCY following.

Dan. What would you have? What do you follow me for?

Luc. Why may'nt I follow you? I must follow you now, all the world over.

Dan. Hold you, hold you there. Not so far by a mile or two. I have enough of your company already, by'r lady and something to spare. You may go home to your brother, an you will: I have no farther to do with you.

Wid. Why, Daniel, child, thou art not out of thy wits, sure, art thou?

Dan. Nay, marry, I don't know; but I am very near, I believe; I am alter'd for the worse mightily, since you saw me; and she has been the cause of it there.

Wid. How so, child?

Dan. I told you before what would come on't of putting me to bed to a strange woman; but you would not be said nay.

Wid. She is your wife now, child, you must love her.

Dan. Why, so I did, at first.

Wid. But you must love her always.

Dan. Always! I loved her as long as I could, mother, and as long as loving was good, I believe; for I find now I don't care a fig for her.

Luc. Why, you lubberly, slovenly, misbegotten blockhead—

Wid. Nay, Mrs. Lucy, say any thing else, and spare not. But, as to his begetting, that touches me. He is as honestly begotten, though I say it, that he is the worse again.

Luc. I see all good-nature is thrown away upon you—

Wid. It was so with his father before him. He takes after him.

Luc. And therefore I will use you as you deserve, you tony.

Wid. Indeed he deserves bad enough; but don't call him out of his name: his name is Daniel, you know.

Dan. She may call me hermaphrodite, if she will; for I hardly know whether I'm a boy or girl.

Well. A boy, I warrant thee, as long as thou livest.

Dan. Let her call me what she pleases, mother; 'tis not her tongue that I'm afraid of.

Luc. I will make such a beast of thee, such a cuckold!

Wid. Oh, pray, no, I hope! Do nothing rashly, Mrs. Lucy.

Luc. Such a cuckold I will make of thee——

Dan. I had rather be a cuckold, than what you would make of me in a week, I'm sure. I have no more manhood left in me already, than there is, saving the mark, in one of my mother's old under-petticoats here.

Wid. Sirrah, sirrah, meddle with your wife's petticoats, and let your mother's alone, you ungracious bird you. *[Beats him.]*

Dan. Why, is the devil in the woman? What have I said now? Do you know, if you were ask'd, I trow? But you are all of a bundle; e'en hang together; he that unties you, makes a rod for his own tail; and so he will find that has any thing to do with you.

Wid. Ay, rogue enough, you shall find: I have a rod for your tail still.

Dan. No wife, and I care not."

Wid. I'll swinge you into better manners, you booby. *[Beats him off, and exit.]*

Well. You have consummated your project upon him.

Luc. Nay, if I have a limb of the fortune, I care not who has the whole body of the fool.

Well. That you shall, and a large one, I promise you.

Luc. Have you heard the news? They talk of an English ship in the river.

Well. I have heard on't, and am preparing to receive it as fast as I can.

Luc. There's something the matter too with the slaves, some disturbance or other; I don't know what it is.

Well. So much the better still. We fish in troubled waters. We shall have fewer eyes upon us. Pray, go you home, and be ready to assist me in your part of the design.

Luc. I can't fail in mine. [Exit.]

Well. The widow has furnished me, I thank her, to carry it on. Now I have got a wife, 'tis high time to think of getting a husband. I carry my fortune about; a thousand pounds in gold and jewels. Let me see—'twill be a considerable trust; and I think I shall lay it out to advantage.

Enter STANMORE.

Stan. So, Welldon, Jack has told me his success, and his hopes of marrying the widow by your means.

Well. I have strained a point, Stanmore, upon your account, to be serviceable to your family.

Stan. I take it upon my account, and am very much obliged to you. But here we are all in an uproar.

Well. So they say. What's the matter?

Stan. A mutiny among the slaves. Oronoko is at the head of them. Our governor is gone out, with his rascally militia against them. What it may come to, nobody knows.

Well. For my part, I shall do as well as the rest; but I'm concerned for my sister and cousin, whom I expect in the ship from England.

Stan. There is no danger of them.

Well. I have a thousand pounds here, in gold and jewels, for my cousin's use, that I would more particularly take care of. 'Tis too great a sum to venture at home; and I would not have her wronged of

it: therefore, to secure it, I think my best way will be to put it into your own keeping.

Stan. You have a very good opinion of my honesty.

[*Takes the purse and casket.*]

Well. I have, indeed. If any thing should happen to me in this bustle, as nobody is secure of accidents, I know you will take my cousin into your protection and care—

Stan. You may be sure on't.

Well. If you hear she is dead, as she may be, then I desire you to accept of the thousand pounds as a legacy, and token of my friendship—My sister is provided for.

Stan. Why, you amaze me! but you are never the nearer dying, I hope, for making your will?

Well. Not a jot; but I love to be beforehand with fortune. If she comes safe, this is not a place for a single woman, you know.—Pray, see her married as soon as you can.

Stan. If she be as handsome as her picture, I can promise her a husband.

Well. If you like her when you see her, I wish nothing so much, as to have you marry her yourself.

Stan. From what I have heard of her, and my engagements to you, it must be her fault if I don't. I hope to have her from your own hand.

Well. And I hope to give her to you, and all this.

Stan. Ay, ay; hang these melancholy reflections—Your generosity has engaged all my services."

Well. I always thought you worth making a friend.

Stan. You shan't find your good opinion thrown away upon me. I am in your debt, and shall think so as long as I live.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Country. Enter on one side of the stage OROONOKO, ABOAN, with the slaves. IMOINDA with a bow and quiver. The women, some leading, others carrying their children upon their backs.

Oro. The women, with their children, fall behind.

I mainda, you must not expose yourself.

Retire, my love; I almost fear for you.

Imo. I fear no danger: life, or death, I will
Enjoy with you.

Oro. My person is your guard.

Abo. "Now, Sir, blame yourself;" if you had not
prevented my cutting his throat, that coward there
had not discovered us. He comes now to upbraid you.

*Enter on the other side the Governor, talking to
HOTMAN, with his rabble.*

Gov. This is the very thing I would have wish'd.
Your honest service to the government [To Hot.
Shall be rewarded with your liberty.

Abo. His honest service! call it what it is,
His villainy, the service of his fear.
If he pretends to honest services,
Let him stand out, and meet me like a man.

[*Advancing.*

Oro. Hold you; and you who come against us,
hold;

I charge you in a general good to all:
And wish I could command you to prevent
The bloody havoc of the murd'ring sword.
I would not urge destruction uncompell'd;
But, if you follow fate, you find it here.
The bounds are set, the limits of our lives;
Between us lies the gaping gulph of death,
To swallow all. Who first advances——

Enter the Captain, with his Crew.

Capt. Here, here, here they are, Governor.
What, seize upon my ship!
Come, boys, fall on——

[*Advancing first, Oroonoko kills him.*

Oro. Thou art fall'n indeed;
Thy own blood be upon thee.

Gov. Rest it there.
He did deserve his death. "Take him away."

[*The body removed.*

You see, sir, you and those mistaken men
Must be our witnesses, we do not come

As enemies, and thirsting for your blood.

If we desir'd your ruin, the revenge

Of our companion's death had push'd it on.

But that we overlook in a regard

To common safety, and the public good.

Oro. Regard that public good: draw off your men,
And leave us to our fortune, We're resolv'd.

Gov. Resolv'd! on what? Your resolutions
Are broken, overturn'd, prevented, lost:

"What fortune now can you raise out of them.

"Nay, grant we should draw off, what can you do?

"Where can you move? What more can you resolve,

"Unless it be to throw yourselves away?"

Famine must eat you up, if you go on.

You see our numbers could with ease compel

What we request; and what do we request?

Only to save yourselves.

[The women with their children gathering about the men.]

Oro. I'll hear no more.

"Women. Hear him, hear him; he takes no care
"of us."

Gov. To those poor wretches, who have been se-
And led away, to all, and every one [duc'd]

We offer a full pardon——

Oro. Then fall on. [Preparing to engage.]

Gov. Lay hold upon't before it be too late;

Pardon and mercy.

[The women clinging about the men, they leave Oroonoko, and fall upon their faces, crying out for pardon.]

Slaves. Pardon, mercy, pardon.

Oro. Let them go all. Now, Governor, I see,
I own the folly of my enterprise,

The rashness of this action; and must blush,

Quite through this veil of night, a whitely shame,

To think I could design to make those free,

Who were by nature slaves; wretches design'd

To be their masters' dogs, and lick their feet.

"Whip, whip them to the knowledge of your gods,

" Your Christian gods, who suffer you to be

" Unjust, dishonest, cowardly, and base;

" And give them your excuse for being so."

I would not live on the same earth with creatures,
That only have the faces of their kind.

Why should they look like men who are not so?

When they put off their noble natures for

The grov'ling qualities of down-cast beasts,

" I wish they had their tails.

" *Abo.* Then we should know them."

Oro. We were too few before for victory,

We're still enow to die. [*To Imoinda and Aboan.*

Enter BLANDFORD.

Gov. Live, royal sir;

Live, and be happy long on your own terms;

Only consent to yield, and you shall have

What terms you can propose for you and yours.

Oro. Consent to yield! shall I betray myself?

" *Gov.* Alas, we cannot fear that your small force,

" The force of two, with a weak woman's arm,

" Should conquer us! I speak in the regard

" And honour of your worth, in my desire

" And forwardness to serve so great a man.

" I would not have it lie upon my thoughts,

" That I was the occasion of the fall

" Of such a prince, whose courage, carried on

" In a more noble cause, would well deserve

" The empire of the world.

" *Oro.* You can speak fair.

" *Gov.* Your undertaking, though it would have

" brought

" So great a loss to us, we must all say

" Was generous and noble; and shall be

" Regarded only as the fire of youth,

" That will break out sometimes in gallant souls;

" We'll think it but the natural impulse,

" A rash impatience of liberty;

" No otherwise.

" *Oro.* Think it what you will.

" I was not born to render an account

"Of what I do, to any but myself."

[*Blan. comes forward.*

Blan. I'm glad you have proceeded by fair means.

[*To the Governor.*

I came to be a mediator.

Gov. Try what you can to work upon him.

Oro. Are you come against me too?

Blan. Is this to come against you?

[*Offering his sword to Oroonoko.*

Unarm'd to put myself into your hands?

I come, I hope to serve you,

Oro. You have serv'd me;

I thank you for't; and I am pleas'd to think

You are my friend, while I had need of one;

But now 'tis past; this farewell, and begone.

[*Embraces him.*

Blan. It is not past, and I must serve you still.

"I would make up these breaches, which the sword

"Will widen more, and close us all in love."

Oro. I know what I have done; and I should be
A child to think they ever can forgive.

Forgive! were there but that, I would not live

To be forgiven. Is there a power on earth,

That I can ever need forgiveness from?

Blan. You sha'not need it.

Oro. No, I wo'not need it.

Blan. You see he offers you your own conditions,
For you and yours.

Oro. Must I capitulate?

Precariously compound, on stinted terms,

To save my life?

Blan. Sir, he imposes none.

You make them for your own security.

"If your great heart cannot descend to treat,

"In adverse fortune, with an enemy,

"Yet sure your honour's safe: you may accept

"Offers of peace and safety from a friend."

Gov. He will rely on what you say to him. [*To Blan.*

Offer him what you can, I will confirm

And make all good. Be you my pledge of trust.

Blan. I'll answer with my life for all he says.

Gov. Ay, do, and pay the forfeit if you please.

[*Aside.*

Blan. Consider, sir; can you consent to throw
That blessing from you, you so hardly found,

[*Of Imo.*

And so much valu'd once?

Oro. Imoinda! Oh,

'Tis she that holds me on this argument
Of tedious life! I could resolve it soon,
Were this curs'd being only in debate.
But Imoinda struggles in my soul:
She makes a coward of me, I confess.
I am afraid to part with her in death,
And more afraid of life, to lose her here.

Blan. This way you must lose her. Think upon
The weakness of her sex, made yet more weak
With her condition, requiring rest,
And soft indulging ease, to nurse your hope,
And make you a glad father.

Oro. There I feel

A father's fondness, and a husband's love,
They seize upon my heart, strain all its strings,
To pull me to them from my stern resolve.

Husband and father! all the melting art
Of eloquence lives in those soft'ning names.
Methinks I see the babe, with infant hands,
Pleading for life, and begging to be born.

" Shall I forbid its birth, deny him light,
" The heavenly comforts of all cheering light,
" And make the womb the dungeon of his death,
" His bleeding mother his sad monument?"

These are the calls of nature, that call loud;
They will be heard, and conquer in their cause;
He must not be a man who can resist them.

No, my Imoinda, I will venture all
To save thee, and that little innocent.

The world may be a better friend to him,
Than I have found it. Now I yield myself:

[*Gives up his sword.*

The conflict's past, and we are in your hands.

[Several men get about Oroonoko and Aboan, and seize them.]

Gov. So you shall find you are. Dispose of them as I commanded you.

Blan. Good Heav'n forbid! you cannot mean——

Gov. This is not your concern.

[To Blandford, who goes to Oroonoko.]

I must take care of you.

[To Imoinda.]

Imo. I'm at the end

Of all my care: here will I die with him.

[Holding Oroonoko.]

Oro. You shall not force her from me. *[He holds her.]*

Gov. Then I must. *[They force her from him.]*

Try other means, and conquer force by force:

Break, cut off his hold, bring her away.

Imo. I do not ask to live, kill me but here.

Oro. Oh, bloody dogs! Inhuman murd'ers!

[Imoinda forced out of one door by the Governor and others. Oroonoko and Aboan hurried out of another.]

[Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter STANMORE, LUCY, and CHARLOTTE.

“ Stanmore. 'Tis strange we cannot hear of him:
“ can nobody give an account of him?

“ Luc. Nay, I begin to despair; I give him for gone.

“ Stan. Not so, I hope.

“ Luc. There are so many disturbances in this
“ devilish country! would we had never seen it!

“ Stan. This is but a cold welcome for you,

“ Madam, after so troublesome a voyage.

“ Char. A cold welcome indeed, sir, without my
“ cousin Welldon: he was the best friend I had in
“ the world.

“ Stan. He was a very good friend of yours indeed,
“ madam.

“ Luc. They have made him away, murdered

“ him for his money, I believe; he took a consi-

"derable sum out with him; I know that has been
"his ruin.

"*Stan.* That has done him no injury to my know-
"ledge; for this morning he put into my custody what
"you speak of; I suppose a thousand pounds, for the
"use of this lady.

"*Char.* I was always obliged to him; and he has
"shewn his care of me, in placing my little affairs in
"such honourable hands.

"*Stan.* He gave me a particular charge of you,
"madam; very particular, so particular, that you
"will be surprised when I tell you.

"*Char.* What, pray, sir?

"*Stan.* I am engaged to get you a husband; I
"promised that before I saw you; and now I have
"seen you, you must give me leave to offer you my-
"self.

"*Luc.* Nay, cousin, never be coy upon the matter;
"to my knowledge, my brother always designed
"you for this gentleman..

"*Stan.* You hear, Madam, he has given me his
"interest, and 'tis the favour I would have begged of
"him. Lord! you are so like him——

"*Char.* That you are obliged to say, that you
"like me for his sake.

"*Stan.* I should be glad to love you for your own."

Char. If I should consent to the fine things you
can say to me, how would you look at last to find
'em thrown away on an old acquaintance!

Stan. An old acquaintance?

Char. Lord, how easily are you men to be imposed
upon! I am no cousin newly arrived from England,
not I; but the very Welldon you wot of.

Stan. Welldon!

Char. Not murdered, nor made away, as my sister
would have you believe; but am, in very good
health, your old friend in breeches that was, and now
your humble servant in petticoats.

Stan. I am glad we have you again. But what
service can you do me in petticoats, pray?

Stan. What do you say?

Char. I am a woman, Sir.

Stan. A woman!

Char. As arrant a woman as you would have had me but now, I assure you.

Stan. And at my service?

Char. If you have any for me in petticoats.

Stan. Yes, yes, I shall find you employment.

Char. You wonder at my proceeding, I believe.

Stan. 'Tis a little extraordinary indeed.

Char. I have taken some pains to come into your favour.

Stan. You might have had it cheaper a great deal.

Char. I might have married you in the person of my English cousin, but could not consent to cheat you even in the thing I had a mind to.

Stan. 'Twas done as you do every thing."

Char. I need not tell you, I made that little plot, and carried it on only for this opportunity. I was resolved to see whether you liked me as a woman, or not: if I had found you indifferent, I would have endeavoured to have been so too: but you say you like me, and therefore I have ventured to discover the truth.

Stan. Like you! I like you so well, that I am afraid you won't think marriage a proof on't: shall I give you any other?

Char. No, no, I'm inclined to believe you, and that shall convince me. At more leisure I'll satisfy you how I came to be in man's clothes; for no ill, I assure you, though I have happened to play the rogue in 'em. "They have assisted me in marrying my sister, and have gone a great way in befriending your cousin Jack with the widow. Can you forgive me for pimping for your family?"

Enter JACK STANMORE.

Stan. So, Jack, what news with you?

J. Stan. I am the forepart of the widow you

know; she's coming after, with the body of the family, the young 'squire, in her hand, my son-in-law that is to be, with the help of Mr. Welldon.

Char. Say you so, sir.

[*Clapping Jack upon the back.*]

Enter Widow LACHTT, with her son DANIEL.

Widow. So, Mrs. Lucy, I have brought him about again; I have chastised him; I have made him as supple as a glove for your wearing, to pull on, or throw off, at your pleasure. Will you ever rebel again? will you, sirrah? but, come, come, down on your marrow-bones, and ask her forgiveness. [*Daniel kneels.*] Say after me: pray forsooth, wife.

Dan. Pray forsooth, wife.

Luc. Well, well, this is a day of good-nature, and so I take you into favour: but first take the oath of allegiance. [*He kisses her hand and rises.*] If ever you do so again——

Dan. Nay, marry if I do, I shall have the worst on't.

Luc. Here's a stranger, forsooth, would be glad to be known to you, a sister of mine, pray salute her.

[*Starts at Charlotte.*]

Wid. Your sister, Mrs. Lucy! What do you mean? this is your brother, Mr. Welldon: do you think I do not know Mr. Welldon?

Luc. Have a care what you say: this gentleman's about marrying her: you may spoil all.

Wid. Fiddle, faddle, what! you would put a trick upon me.

Char. No, faith, widow, the trick is over, it has taken sufficiently, and now I will teach you the trick, to prevent your being cheated another time.

Wid. How? cheated, Mr. Welldon!

Char. Why, aye, you will always take things by the wrong handle: I see you will have me Mr. Welldon: I grant you, I was Mr. Welldon a little while, to please you or so: but Mr. Stanmore here has persuaded me into a woman again.

Wid. A woman! Pray let me speak with you.

[*Drawing her aside.*] You are not in earnest, I hope? a woman!

Char. Really a woman.

Wid. Gads my life! I could not be cheated in every thing : I know a man from a woman at these years, or the devil is in't. Pray, did not you marry me?

Char. You would have it so.

Wid. And did not I give you a thousand pounds this morning?

Char. Yes, indeed, 'twas more than I deserved : but you had your penny-worth for your penny, I suppose! you seemed to be pleased with your bargain.

Wid. A rare bargain I have made on't truly! I have laid out my money to a fine purpose upon a woman.

Char. You would have a husband, and I provided for you as well as I could.

Wid. Yes, yes; you have provided for me.

Char. And you have paid me very well for't, I thank you.

Wid. 'Tis very well! I may be with child too, for aught I know, and may go look for the father.

Char. Nay, if you think so, 'tis time to look about you indeed. " Ev'n make up the matter as well as you can (I advise you as a friend), and let us live " neighbourly and lovingly together.

" *Wid.* I have nothing else for it that I know of " now."

Char. For my part, Mrs. Lackitt, your thousand pounds will engage me not to laugh at you. Then, my sister is married to your son; he is to have half your estate, I know; and indeed they may live upon it, very comfortably to themselves, and very creditably to you.

Wid. Nay, I can blame nobody but myself,

Char. You have enough for a husband still, and that you may bestow upon honest Jack Stanmore

Wid. Is he the man then?

Char. He is the man you are obliged to.

J. Stan. Yes, faith, widow, I am the man: I have done fairly by you, you find; you know what you have to trust to before hand.

Wid. Well, well, I see you will have me; even marry me, and make an end of the business.

Stan. Why that's well said: now we are all agreed, and all well provided for.

Enter a Servant to STANMORE.

Serv. Sir, Mr. Blandford desires you to come to him, and bring as many of our friends as you can with you.

Stan. I come to him. You shall all go along with me. Come, young gentleman, marriage is the fashion, you see; you must like it now.

Dan. If I don't, how shall I help myself?

Luc. Nay, you may hang yourself in the noose, if you please, but you will never get out on't with struggling.

Dan. Come then, let's e'en jog on in the old road. Cuckold, or worse, I must now be contented: I'm not the first has marry'd and repented. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Governor, with BLANDFORD and Planters.

Blan. Have you no reverence for future fame?

No awe upon your actions, from the tongues,
The cens'ring tongues of men, that will be free?

"If you confess humanity, believe

"There is a God, or devil, to reward

"Our doings here: do not provoke your fate.

"The hand of Heav'n is arm'd against these crimes,

"With hotter thunderbolts, prepar'd to shoot,

"And nail you to the earth, a sad example;

"A monument of faithless infamy."

Enter STANMORE, J. STANMORE, CHARLOTTE,

LUCY, Widow, and DANIEL.

So, Stanmore, you, I know, the women too

Will join with me: 'tis Oroonoko's cause,

A lover's cause, a wretched woman's cause,

That will become your intercession. [*To the women.*]

1st Plant. Never mind 'em, Governor; he ought

to be made an example, for the good of the plantation.

2d Plant. Ay, ay, 'twill frighten the negroes from attempting the like again.

1st Plant. What, rise against their lords and masters! at this rate no nian is safe from his own slaves.

2d Plant. No, no more he is. Therefore, one and all, Governor, we declare for hanging.

Omn. Plant. Ay, ay, hang him, hang him.

Wid. What, hang him? Oh, forbid it, Governor.

Char. Luc. We all petition for him.

J. Stan. They are for a holiday; guilty, or not, is not the business; hanging is their sport.

Blan. We are not sure so wretched, to have these, The rabble, judge for us: the hanging crowd, The arbitrary guard of Fortune's power, Who wait to catch the sentence of her frowns, And hurry all to ruin she condemns.

Stan. So far from farther wrongs, that 'tis a shame He should be where he is. Good Governor, Order his liberty: he yielded up Himself, his all, at your discretion.

Blan. Discretion! no he yielded on your word; And I am made the cautionary pledge, The gage and hostage of your keeping it. Remember, Sir, he yielded on your word; Your word! which honest men will think should be The last resort of truth and trust on earth: There's no appeal beyond it but to Heav'n.

"An oath is a recognizance to Heav'n,

"Binding us over in the courts above,

"To plead to the indictment of our crimes,

"That those who 'scape this world should suffer

"But in the common intercourse of men, [there.

"(Where the dread majesty is not invoc'd,

"His honour not immediately concern'd,

"Not made a party in our interests)

"Our word is all to be rely'd upon."

Wid. Come, come, you'll be as good as your word, we know.

Stan. He's out of all power of doing any harm now, if he were disposed to it.

Char. But he is not disposed to it.

Blan. To keep him where he is, will make him soon Find out some desperate way to liberty: He'll hang himself, or dash out his mad brains.

Char. Pray try him by gentle means: we'll all be sureties for him.

Omn. All, all.

" *Luc.* We will all answer for him now."

Gov. Well, you will have it so; do what you please, just what you will with him, I give you leave. [*Exit.*

Blan. We thank you, Sir; this way; pray come with me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

ORONOKO upon his back, his legs and arms stretched out, and chained to the ground. Enter BLANDFORD, STANMORE, &c.

Blan. Oh, miserable sight! help, every one, Assist me all, to free him from his chains.

[*They help him up and bring him forward, looking down.*]

Most injured prince! how shall we clear ourselves?

We cannot hope you will vouchsafe to hear,

Or credit what we say in the defence

And cause of our suspected innocence.

Stan. We are not guilty of your injuries,

No way consenting to 'em; but abhor,

Abominate, and loath this cruelty.

" *Blan.* It is our curse, but make it not our crime;

" A heavy curse upon us, that we must

" Share any thing in common, ev'n the light,

" The elements and seasons, with such men,

" Whose principles, like the fam'd dragon's teeth,

" Scatter'd and sown, would shoot a harvest up

" Of fighting mischiefs to confound themselves,

" And ruin all about 'em.

" *Stan.* Profligates!

" Whose bold Titanian impiety

" Would once again pollute their mother earth,
" Force her to teem with her old monstrous brood
" Of giants, and forget the race of men.

" *Blan.* We are not so: believe us innocent.

" We come prepar'd with all our services,

" To offer a redress of your base wrongs.

" Which way shall we employ 'em?

" *Stan.* Tell us, sir:

" If there is any thing that can atone?

" But nothing can: that may be some amends"—

Oro. If you would have me think you are not all
Confederates, all accessory to

The base injustice of your governor:

If you would have me live, as you appear

Concern'd for me: if you would have me live

To thank, and bless you, there is yet a way

To tie me ever to your honest love:

Bring my Imoinda to me; give me her,

To charm my sorrows, and, if possible,

I'll sit down with my wrongs, never to rise

Against my fate, or think of vengeance more.

Blan. Be satisfy'd you may depend upon us,
We'll bring her safe to you and suddenly.

Char. We will not leave you in so good a work.

Wid. No, no, we'll go with you.

Blan. In the mean time

Endeavour to forget, sir, and forgive:

And hope a better fortune.

[*Exeunt.*]

Oro. [*Alone.*] Forget! forgive! I must indeed forget,

When I forgive: but while I am a man,

In flesh, that bears the living marks of shame,

The print of his dishonourable chains,

My memory still rousing up my wrongs,

I never can forgive this governor,

This villain; the disgrace of trust, and place,

And just contempt of delegated power.

What shall I do? if I declare myself,

I know him, he will sneak behind his guard
Of followers, and brave me in his fears.

Else, lion-like, with my devouring rage,

I would rush on him, fasten on his throat,
 Tear a wide passage to his treacherous heart,
 And that way lay him open to the world. [*Pausing.*
 If I should turn his Christian arts on him,
 Promise him, speak him fair, flatter and creep
 With fawning steps, to get within his faith,
 I could betray him then, as he has me.
 But am I sure by that to right myself?
 Lying's a certain mark of cowardice,
 And, when the tongue forgets its honesty,
 The heart and hand may drop their functions too,
 And nothing worthy be resolv'd or done.
 "The man must go together, bad, or good:
 "In one part frail, he soon grows weak in all."
 Honour should be concern'd in honour's cause,
 "That is not to be cur'd by contraries,
 "As bodies are, whose health is often drawn
 "From rankest poisons." Let me but find out.
 An honest remedy, I have the hand,
 A ministring hand, that will apply it home, [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Governor's House. Enter Governor.

Gov. I would not have her tell me, she consents;
 In favour of the sex's modesty,
 That still should be presum'd, because there is
 A greater impudence in owning it,
 Than in allowing all that we can do.
 "This truth I know, and against myself
 " (So unaccountable are lovers' ways)
 "I talk, and lose the opportunities,
 "Which love, and she, expects I should employ.
 "Ev'n she expects:" for when a man has said
 All that is fit, to save the decency,
 The woman knows the rest is to be done,
 I wo'not disappoint her. [*Going.*

Enter BLANDFORD, the STANMORES, DANIEL, Mrs. LACKITT, CHARLOTTE, and LUCY.

Wid. Oh, Governor, I'm glad we've lit upon you.

Gov. Why, what's the matter?

Char. Nay, nothing extraordinary. But one good action draws on another. You have given the prince his freedom: now we come a begging for his wife: you won't refuse us.

Gov. Refuse you! No, no, what have I to do to refuse you?

Wid. You won't refuse to send her to him, she means.

Gov. I send her to him!

Wid. We have promised him to bring her.

Gov. You do very well; 'tis kindly done of you: ev'n carry her to him, with all my heart.

Luc. You must tell us where she is.

Gov. I tell you! why don't you know?

Blan. Your servant says she's in the house.

Gov. No, no, I brought her home at first, indeed; but I thought it would not look well to keep her here; I removed her in the hurry, only to take care of her. What! she belongs to you: I have nothing to do with her.

Char. But where is she now, sir?

Gov. Why, faith, I can't say certainly: you'll hear of her at Parham house, I suppose: there, or thereabouts: I think I sent her there.

Blan. I'll have an eye on him. *[Aside.*

[Exeunt all but the Governor.

Gov. I have ly'd myself into a little time,
And must employ it: they'll be here again;
"But I must be before 'em."

[Going out, he meets Imoinda, and seizes her.
Are you come?

I'll court no longer for a happiness

That is in my own keeping: you may still

Refuse to grant, so I have power to take.

The man that asks deserves to be deny'd.

[She disengages one hand, and draws his sword from his side upon him; Governor starts and retires; Blandford enters behind him.

Imo. He does indeed, that asks unworthily.

Blan. You hear her, sir, that asks unworthily.

Gov. You are no judge.

Blan. I am of my own slave.

Gov. Begone, and leave us.

Blan. When you let her go.

Gov. To fasten upon you.

Blan. I must defend myself.

Imo. Help, murder, help!

[Imoinda retreats towards the door, favoured by Blandford; when they are closed, she throws down the sword, and runs out. Governor takes up his sword, they fight, close and fall, Blandford upon him. Servants enter and part 'em.]

Gov. She sha'not 'scape me so, I've gone too far, Not to go farther. Curse on my delay:

But yet she is, and shall be in my power.

Blan. Nay, then it is the war of honesty;

I know you, and will save you from yourself.

Gov. All come along with me.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter OROONOKO.

Oro. To honour bound, and yet a slave to love!

I am distracted by their rival powers,

And both will be obeyed. O great revenge!

Thou raiser and restorer of fall'n fame!

Let me not be unworthy of thy aid,

For stopping in thy course: I still am thine;

But can't forget I am Imoinda's too.

She calls me from my wrongs to rescue her.

No man condemn me, who has never felt

A woman's power, or try'd the force of love:

"All tempers yield and soften in those fires;

"Our honours, interests resolving down,

"Run in the gentle current of our joys;

"But not to sink, and drown our memory:

"We mount again to action, like the sun,

"That rises from the bosom of the sea,

"To run his glorious race of light anew,

"And carry on the world." Love, love will be

My first ambition, and my fame the next.

Enter ABOAN bloody.

My eyes are turn'd against me, and combine]

With my sworn enemies to represent
This spectacle of horror. Aboan!

"My ever faithful friend?"

Abo. I have no name

That can distinguish me from the vile earth,
To which I'm going: a poor abject worm,
That crawl'd a while upon the bustling world
And now trampled to my dust again.

Oro. I see thee gash'd and mangled!

Abo. Spare my shame

To tell how they have us'd me; but believe
The hangman's hand would have been merciful,
Do not you scorn me, sir, to think I can
Intend to live under this infamy.

I do not come for pity, to complain.

I've spent an honourable life with you.

The earliest servant of your rising fame,

And would attend it with my latest care;

My life was yours, and so shall be my death.

You must not live——

Bending and sinking, I have dragg'd my steps

Thus far, to tell you that you cannot live;

To warn you of those ignominious wrongs,

Whips, rods, and all the instruments of death

Which I have felt and are prepared for you.

This was the duty that I had to pay:

'Tis done; and, now I beg to be discharg'd.

Oro. What shall I do for thee?

Abo. My body tires,

And wo'not bear me off to liberty;

I shall again be taken, made a slave.

A sword, a dagger, yet would rescue me.

I have not strength to go and find out death,

You must direct him to me.

Oro. Here he is.

[*Gives him a dagger.*]

The only present I can make thee now.

And, next the honourable means of life,

I would bestow the honest means of death.

Abo. I cannot stay to thank you. If there is

A being after this, I shall be yours.

In the next world, your faithful slave again.
 This is to try. [*Stabs himself.*] I had a living sense
 Of all your royal favours; but this last
 Strikes through my heart. I wo'not say farewell,
 For you must follow me. [*Dies.*]

Oro. In life and death

The guardian of my honour! Follow thee!
 I should have gone before thee; then perhaps
 Thy fate had been prevented. All his care
 Was to preserve me from the barbarous rage
 That worry'd him. only for being mine.
 Why, why, ye gods! why am I so accurs'd,
 That it must be a reason of your wrath,
 A guilt, a crime sufficient to the fate
 Of any one, but to belong to me?
 My friend has found it out, my wife will soon:
 My wife! the very fear's too much for life.
 I can't support it. Where's Imoinda? Oh!

[*Going out, she meets him, running into his arms!*
 Thou bosom softness! Down of all my cares!
 I could recline my thoughts upon this breast
 To a forgetfulness of all my griefs,
 And yet be happy; but it wo'not be.
 Thou art disorder'd, pale, and out of breath!
 If fate pursues thee, find a shelter here.
 What is it thou wouldst tell me?

Imo. 'Tis in vain to call him villain.

Oro. Call him Governor: is it not so?

Imo. There's not another, sure.

Oro. Villain's the common name of mankind
 here;

But his most properly. What! what of him?
 I fear to be resolv'd and must enquire.
 He had thee in his power.

Imo. I blush to think it.

Oro. Blush! to think what?

Imo. That I was in his power.

Oro. He cou'd not use it?

Imo. What can't such men do?

Oro. But did he? Durst he?

Imo. What he cou'd he dar'd.

Oro. His own gods damn him then! for ours have
No punishn ent for such unheard of crime. [none,

Imo. This monster, cunning in his flatteries,
When he had wearied all his useless arts,
Leap'd out, fierce as a beast of prey, to seize me.
I trembled, fear'd.

Oro. I fear and tremble now.
What could preserve thee? What deliver thee?

Imo. That worthy man, you us'd to call your friend.

Oro. Blandford?

Imo. Came in, and sav'd me from his rage.

Oro. He was a friend indeed to rescue thee!
And for his sake, I'll think it possible
A Christian may be yet an honest man. [through,

Imo. Oh, did you know what I have struggled
To save me yours, sure you would promise me
Never to see me forc'd from you again.

Oro. To promise thee! Oh, do I need to promise?
But there is now no farther use of words.
Death is security for all our fears.

[*Shews Aboan's body on the floor.*

And yet I cannot trust him.

Imo. Aboan!

Oro. Mangled and torn, resolv'd to give me time
To fit myself for what I must expect,
Groan'd out a warning to me, and expir'd.

Imo. For what you must expect?

Oro. Would that were all!

Imo. What! to be butcher'd thus——

Oro. Just as thou seest.

Imo. By barb'rous hands, to fall at last their prey?

Oro. I have run the race with honour; shall I now
Lag, and be overtaken at the goal?

Imo. No.

Oro. I must look back to thee. [Tenderly.

Imo. You sha'not need.

I am always present to your purpose, say,
Which way would you dispose me?

“ *Oro.* Have a care!

- " 'Thou'rt on a precipice, and dost not see
" Whither that question leads thee. Oh! too soon
" Thou dost enquire what the assembled gods
" Have not determin'd, and will latest doom.
" Yet this I know of fate, this is most certain,
" I cannot, as I would, dispose of thee;
" And as I ought, I dare not. Oh, Imoinda!
" *Imo.* Alas, that sigh—Why do you tremble so?
" Nay, then 'tis bad indeed, if you can weep.
" *Oro.* My heart runs over, if my gushing eyes
" Betray a weakness which they never knew,
" Believe, thou only, thou couldst cause these tears:
" The gods themselves conspire with faithless men
" To our destruction.
" *Imo.* Heav'n and earth our foes!
" *Oro.* It is not always granted to the great
" To be most happy; if the angry pow'rs
" Repent their favours, let 'em take 'em back:
" The hopes of empire which they gave my youth,
" By making me a prince, I here resign.
" Let 'em quench in me all those glorious fires,
" Which kindled at their beams: that lust of fame,
" That fever of ambition, restless still,
" And burning with the sacred thirst of sway,
" Which they inspired, to qualify my fate,
" And make me fit to govern under them,
" Let 'em extinguish. I submit myself
" To their high pleasure, and devoted bow
" Yet lower, to continue still a slave,
" Hopeless of liberty: and if I could
" Live after it, would give up honour too,
" To satisfy their vengeance, to avert
" This only curse, the curse of losing thee.
" *Imo.* If Heav'n cou'd be appeas'd, these cruel
" Are not to be entreated, or believ'd: [men
" Oh, think on that, and be no more deceiv'd.
" *Oro.* What can we do?
" *Imo.* Can I do any thing?
" *Oro.* But we were born to suffer.
" *Imo.* Suffer both;

“ Both die, and so prevent ’em.

“ *Oro.* By thy death!

“ Oh, let me hunt my travell’d thoughts again!

“ Range the wide waste of desolate despair;

“ Start any hope. Alas, I lose myself.

“ ’Tis pathless, dark, and barren all to me.

“ Thou art my only guide, my light of life,

“ And thou art leaving me: send out thy beams

“ Upon the wing; let ’em fly all around,

“ Discover every way: is there a dawn,

“ A glimmering of comfort? The great God,

“ That rises on the world, must shine on us.

“ *Imo.* And see us set before him.

“ *Oro.* Thou bespeak’st

“ And go’st before me.

“ *Imo.* So I would in love,

“ In the dear unsuspected part of life.

“ In death for love. Alas! what hopes for me?

“ I was preserv’d but to acquit myself,

“ To beg to die with you.

“ *Oro.* And can’st thou ask it?

“ I never durst enquire into myself

“ About thy fate, and thou resolv’st it all.

“ *Imo.* Alas, my lord, my fate’s resolv’d in yours.

“ *Oro.* Oh! keep thee there: let not thy virtue
“ shrink

“ From my support, and I will gather strength,

“ Fast as I can, to tell thee——

“ *Imo.* I must die:

“ I know ’tis fit, and I can die with you. [fears,

“ *Oro.* Oh, thou hast banish’d hence a thousand

“ Which sicken’d at my heart, and quite unmann’d

“ me. [strength,

“ *Imo.* Your fear’s for me, I know; you fear my

“ And could not overcome your tenderness,

“ To pass this sentence on me: and indeed

“ There you were kind, as I have always found you,

“ As you have ever been; for though I am

“ Resign’d, and ready to obey my doom,

“ Methinks it should not be pronounc’d by you.

- “ Oro. Oh, that was all the labour of my grief!
“ My heart and tongue forsook me in the strife.
“ I never could pronounce it.
“ Imo. I have for you, for both of us.
“ Oro. Alas, for me, my death
“ I could regard as the last scene of life,
“ And act it thro’ with joy, to have it done.
“ But then to part with thee——
“ Imo. ’Tis hard to part;
“ But parting thus, as the most happy must,
“ Parting in death, makes it the easier.
“ You might have thrown me off, forsaken me,
“ And my misfortunes—that had been a death,
“ Indeed, of terror, to have trembled at.
“ Oro. Forsaken! thrown thee off!
“ Imo. But ’tis a pleasure more than life can give,
“ That with unconquer’d passion, to the last,
“ You struggle still, and fain would hold me to you.
“ Oro. Ever, ever; and let those stars, which are
“ my enemies,
“ Witness against me in the other world,
“ If I would leave this mansion of my bliss,
“ To be the brightest ruler of their skies.
“ Oh, that we could incorporate, be one,
[Embracing her.
“ One body, as we have been long one mind!
“ That, blended so, we might together mix,
“ And, losing thus our being to the world,
“ Be only found to one another’s joys.
“ Imo. Is this the way to part?
“ Oro. Which is the way?
“ Imo. The god of love is blind, and cannot find it.
“ But, quick, make haste; our enemies have eyes,
“ To find us out, and shew us the worst way
“ Of parting. Think on them.
“ Oro. Why dost thou wake me?
“ Imo. Oh, no more of love!
“ For if I listen to you, I shall quite
“ Forget my dangers, and desire to live.
“ I can’t live yours. [Takes up the dagger.”

Oro. "There all the stings of death
Are shot into my heart."——What shall I do?

Imo. This dagger will instruct you. [*Gives it him.*]

Oro. Ah! this dagger!

Like fate, it points me to the horrid deed.

Imo. Strike, strike it home, and bravely save us
There is no other safety. [both.]

Oro. It must be——

But first a dying kiss——

[*Kisses her.*]

This last embrace——

[*Embracing her.*]

And now——

Imo. I'm ready.

Oro. Oh! where shall I strike?

Is there the smallest grain of that lov'd body

That is not dearer to me than my eyes,

My bosom'd heart, and all the life blood there?

Bid me cut off these limbs, hew off these hands,

Dig out these eyes—tho' I would keep them last

To gaze upon thee—but to murder thee,

The joy, the charm of every ravish'd sense!

My wife!—forbid it, Nature.

Imo. 'Tis your wife,

Who on her knees conjures you. Oh, in time,

Prevent those mischiefs that are falling on us!

You may be hurried to a shameful death,

And I too dragg'd to the vile governor.

Then may I cry aloud. When you are gone,

Where shall I find a friend again to save me?

Oro. It will be so. Thou unexampled virtue!

Thy resolution has recover'd mine.

And now prepare thee.

Imo. Thus, with open arms,

I welcome you and death.

[*He drops his dagger as he looks on her, and throws himself on the ground.*]

Oro. I cannot bear it.

Oh, let me dash against the rock of fate,

Dig up this earth, and tear her bowels out,

To make a grave, deep as the centre down,

To swallow wide and bury us together!

It wo't be. Oh, then some pitying god,
 (If there be one a friend to innocence)
 Find yet a way to lay her beauties down
 Gently in death, and save me from her blood. [thus.

Imo. Oh, rise! 'tis more than death to see you
 I'll ease your love, and do the deed myself—

[*She takes up the dagger, he rises in haste to take it from her.*

Oro. Oh, hold! I charge thee, hold.

Imo. Though I must own
 It would be nobler for us both from you.

Oro. Oh, for a whirlwind's wing, to hurry us
 To yonder cliff, which frowns upon the flood,
 That, in embraces lock'd, we might plunge in,
 And perish thus in one another's arms.

Imo. Alas! what shout is that?

Oro. I see them coming.
 They sha'not overtake us. This last kiss,
 And now, farewell.

Imo. Farewell, farewell, for ever.

Oro. I'll turn my face away, and do it so.
 Now, are you ready?

Imo. Now. But do not grudge me
 The pleasure, in my death, of a last look—
 Pray, look upon me—Now I'm satisfied.

Oro. So fate must be by this.

[*Going to stab her, he stops short; she lays her hand on his, in order to give the blow.*

Imo. Nay, then I must assist you.
 And since it is the common cause of both,
 'Tis just that both should be employ'd in it.
 Thus, thus, 'tis finish'd; and I bless my fate.
 [Stabs herself.
 That, where I liv'd, I die, in these lov'd arms.

[*Dies.*
Oro. She's gone. And now all's at an end with me.
 Soft, lay her down—Oh, we will part no more!

[*Then throws himself by her.*
 But let me pay the tribute of my grief,
 A few sad tears to thy lov'd memory,

And then I follow—[*Shouts.*] [*Weeps over her.*
But I stay too long. [*A noise again.*

The noise comes nearer. Hold, before I go,
There's something would be done. It shall be so,
And then, Imoinda, I'll come all to thee. [*Rises.*

BLANDFORD and his party enter before the Governor
and his party, swords drawn on both sides.

Gov. You strive in vain to save him; he shall die.

Blan. Not while we can defend him with our lives.

Gov. Where is he?

Oro. Here is the wretch whom you would have.

Put up your swords, and let not civil broils

Engage you in the cursed cause of one

Who cannot live, and now entreats to die.

This object will convince you.

Blan. 'Tis his wife. [*They gather about the body.*
Alas, there was no other remedy!

Gov. Who did the bloody deed?

Oro. The deed was mine—

Bloody I know it is; and I expect

Your laws should tell me so. Thus, self-condemn'd,

I do resign myself into your hands,

The hands of justice—But I hold the sword

For you—and for myself.

[*Stabs the Governor and himself, then throws
himself by Imoinda's body.*

“ Stan. He has killed the Governor, and stabb'd
“ himself.”

Oro. 'Tis as it should be now—I have sent his
To be a witness of that happiness [ghost .
In the next world, which he deny'd us here. [*Dies.*

Blan. I hope there is a place of happiness
In the next world for such exalted virtue.

Pagan or unbeliever, yet he liv'd

To all he knew; and, if he went astray,

There's mercy still above to set him right.

But Christians, guided by the heavenly ray,

Have no excuse if we mistake our way. [*Exeunt.*

EPILOGUE.

*YOU see we try all shapes, and shifts, and arts,
To tempt your favours, and regain your hearts.
We weep and laugh, join grief and mirth together.
Like rain and sunshine mix'd, in April weather.
Your different tastes divide our poet's cares;
One foot the sock, t'other the buskin wears.
Thus, while he strives to please, he's forced to do't,
Like Volscius, hip hop, in a single boot.
Critics, he knows, for this may damn his books:
But he makes feasts for friends, and not for cooks.
Though errant knights of late no favour find,
Sure you will be to ladies errant kind.
To follow fame knight errants make profession:
We damsels fly to save our reputation:
So they their valour shew, we our discretion.
To lands of monsters and fierce beasts they go:
We to those islands where rich husbands grow:
Though they're no monsters, we may make them so.
If they're of English growth, they'll bear't with
patience:
But save us from a spouse of Oroonoko's nations:
Then bless your stars, you happy London wives,
Who love at large, each day, yet keep your lives:
Nor envy poor Imoinda's doating blindness,
Who thought her husband kill'd her out of kindness.
Death with a husband ne'er had shewn such charms,
Had she once dy'd within a lover's arms.
Her error was from ignorance proceeding;
Poor soul! she wanted some of our town-breeding.
Forgive this Indian fondness of her spouse;
Their law no Christian liberty allows:
Alas, they make a conscience of their vows!
If virtue in a Heathen be a fault,
Then damn the Heathen school where she was taught.
She might have learn'd to cuckold, jilt, and sham,
Had Covent-Garden been in Surinam.*